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44-45**NEW** **COMPUTER**  
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SECRET PCWs!****EXCLUSIVE!**

We reveal details of:

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**Commodore chief admits:**  
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PUBLICATIONS  
Your gateway to the future

# Frontend

Frontend Frontend Frontend

What a twisty turny thing the world is and here at Frontend we show you just how weird things can get if they really try

## HOME HELPING CHIPS MAKE DOMESTIC BLISS

Since the 1950's when cartoon characters were sent scurrying by a manic carpet cleaner, the dream of the robot-run house has long been cherished.

Now the dream is closer to becoming a reality for the person in the street. Californian company, Echelon, has announced the development and testing of a new chip which, the company claims, can link basic household appliances.

Called the 'Teleon', the chip

is able to create Local Operating Networks (LONs). These LONs effectively link appliances so that they run in pre-defined harmony.

For example, you could set up your stereo for CD player, or CD/TV to begin playing your favourite, most relaxing tune, as soon as you hit the switch which opens your garage door at the end of the day.

Unlike previous systems, which have been put on test in show homes throughout the States and Japan, Neuro

technology is looking to go big league with licensing deals already having been signed with Motorola and Toshiba.

Neuro is also making positively evangelistic noises about the potential of its system. Echelon's European business development director, Richard Kagen is claiming: "We are aiming to have 95 per cent of all the electrical appliances on the planet using our 'Neuron chips'. We can only add and see, as always, 30



• Sports reporting isn't all drible, drib parents and over-the-moon 120 per cent economies, if you have the "wired" equipment and a fresh article you could change the face of John Motson as we know it. And today might be pleased to offer you the means to this end.

## Cub Reporters

Students from West Yorkshire are getting a taste of the reporter's life with a little help from electronics giant, Tandy.

They are being supplied with 30 Tandy RPT portable word processors to go out and gather news at the World Student Games currently being held in Sheffield.

Each day they return to the classroom with the RPTs and download their reports and interviews to a host RPT which is then used to produce a *Sharing The Games*, a daily newspaper for the games event.

Each day, the editorial team comes from a different school and they are competing to see who can turn out the most professional results. Output for *Sharing The Games* is by a laser printer with basic computer graphics being used to break up the page with illustrations. ■

## HACK WORMS

Cyberpunk: Outlaws and Hackers on the Computer Frontier is now back published in the United States, and is yet available in this country.

Written by Katie Hafner and John Markoff, it is already selling well in the cyber-conscious States. It details examples of hacking such as the infamous Internet Worm which was allegedly placed into major systems by Robert Morris. In fact the book has been

called in Morris's trial in the US Supreme Court. It is also to be one of the main topics at discussion at major meeting in New York entitled Hackers, Computer Crimes and First Amendment Issues. ■



## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR AMIGA

If you've got an Amiga or you're thinking of buying one - don't miss next week's *New Computer Express*, or you'll miss out on a 24 page colour supplement covering everything you need to know about the Amiga: Art, DTP, Amiga 500, programming, upgrades, beginners, business, COMMS and hardware - it's all up for grabs. FREE! ■

## Acorn gets Whitbread best



• Can British athlete Felina Whitbread possibly hope to keep up with the pace of the Acorn Archimedes? With a six figure sum as incentive, maybe.

Acorn Computers, the company responsible for the super-quick, RISC reduced instruction set computing based Archimedes has signed what could be a six-figure deal with javelin throwing champion, Felina Whitbread's athletics club.

The Thurrock, Essex-based Chafford Hundred Athletic Club numbers not only Felina amongst its stars, but also Lurford Christie, Colin Jackson, Steve Borwick and John Regan, all of whom have represented their country at international competition level. The deal means that you will get to see sports people at Acorn-sponsored events. They will also endorse Acorn products - advertising material.

Not only does the Athletics club get the much needed sponsorship, it will also use the publicity to further the careers of up and coming sprinters. According to Ms Whitbread: "We are keen to encourage young athletes to develop, especially those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds". ■

## AND THE CLOCK STRUCK THIRTEEN

It probably the most hi-tech and Crawford time and motion study ever, staff at Olivetti's Cambridge research labs are being monitored by means of tiny, infra-red 'active badges'.

This has led civil rights campaigners, Liberty formerly The National Council for Civil Liberties to warn that such a system could be misused.

Liberty is claiming that, because there are no safeguards on the system it might well be used to invade the privacy of individual members of staff as they go about their everyday business.

The badges which are similar to those currently being issued on criminals in the US, measure 5cm by 5cm by 0.5cm, and work in unison with transceivers placed around the building.

Basically the system keeps an 'eye' on Olivetti by logging staff movements and storing the constantly updated data on Local Area Network, LAN-based PCs and workstations. Apparently the wearing of badges is optional. And one member of staff has been reported as saying that they don't really matter because: "Everyone trusts everyone else". Who said they didn't? ■

## BIG BRUCE IS WATCHING

It is not only Olivetti which is monitoring people in a daily, even hourly basis now And the Clock Struck Thirteen, the authorities in Perth, Australia also feel the need to keep an eye on their citizens.

The city fathers have decided to extend their computer-controlled public surveillance system to keep track of persistent drunk pedestrians.

This has led to outraged cries from civil liberties organisations which object to the 25 camera system that is capable of keeping a constant eye on the Perthshire's pedestrians on a 24 hour basis.

The campaigners are all the more angry due to the fact that the security system has been specifically based on keeping an increasingly low eye on citizens as a result of several deaths in the 1980s. However, none of the citizens who they did not object. ■

Eastern robotics • Household chips • Arc gets sporty • Are you

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## COVER FEATURE

## Amstrad's secret PCWs?

Find out about the two new machines Amstrad wants to hide – page 5

## REVIEWS

## A cure for PC phobias

Manuals don't always give you the answers you need, but PC Crash Course can help you out – page 49

## Postscript printing

DTP looks great on the screen, but can this quality be matched in output? Express puts Epson's EPL-7500 laser printer to the test – page 53



## CDTV – the reality

Commodore says CDTV will fit into your sitting room like a VCR. We put theory into practice with a hands on review – pages 55 &amp; 56

## EVERY WEEK

## News

The hottest and the latest – pages 4-8



## What's New

Moveable media, database discounts, tiny dual drives, file server software and more – page 10

## Games Week

Hot tips and the charts, plus *RBI Two baseball* – page 50

## Pump up your PC!

A 25MHz SOTA board is up for grabs



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## Far Eastern robots slip floppy disks

A new 250,000 foot-square factory has been set up in Singapore to manufacture floppy disk drives. "Big deal" you say. Well it is if you consider that it is the first of its kind to be "manne" entirely by robots.

According to a Lynda Orban, a spokeswoman for Western Digital: "The new plant can produce 5,000 drives a day, a

new drive every 15 seconds."

The factory which belongs to Western Digital does not have a single human in operation, it also the first new facility to be set up by the company since the closure of its Puerto Rico plant in December 1990.

Just what the robots think of the situation has not been reported as yet. ■



• Robots have come a long way from receiving the dross to distress – now they are running whole factories.

## COMPUTER CALAMITIES

## SAFETY DEPOSIT

You're bound the right at the computer office, now prepare for the paperless supermarket. Safety is trying a computerized pay system in Calabash which does away with cheques and cash. Customers are issued with special cards which automatically debit their bank accounts. The whole thing takes five seconds.

Control as they send your tales of computer-related chaos and catastrophe to Computer Calamities, New Computer Express, 30 Marshfield Street, Ash Bath, BA1 2BB and will pay a fee if it's proved.

This week, Mike Bruce of Ebsco ventures us that virtual reality is mostly virtual with the tale (apocryphal or not) of the Japanese net driver who drove home following a few hours of putting a VR car through its paces. He hadn't quite clocked back into reality, and crashed into a tree which he was sure would simply melt away. ■

## The BR black box

British Rail is currently testing out a new warning system, called Automatic Train Protection (ATP) similar to the black box system used in aircraft.

ATP is being put through its paces on two of BR's commercial lines, one between London Paddington and Bristol, and one between London Marylebone and Aylesbury.

The new warning system is able to control the way in which a driver actually controls a train. Using the present system, a driver can see, and even acknowledge a signal, and can then go straight through it without understanding it, meaning, ATP can override any such response. It does this by monitoring both the signal and the driver's reactions to it.

The black box angle of ATP keeps a record of all data received in the cabin, as well as a variety of the train's basic operations such as door opening and closing, and the minute by minute workings of the local traction systems.

Data collected in this way can be used in enquiries following such disasters as the Clapham tragedy, and the more recent crash just outside of Glasgow, Scotland.

Network South East is already planning to invest some £3 million in the system which is to be installed in engines travelling the routes between Liverpool Street and Cambridge, and Epsom to Northampton. He date has so far been announced for a full national implementation of ATP. ■



• What is the similarity between a BR locomotive and a Boeing 747? Well some might say that the two are not far from each other in the point, BR is now adopting a black box data recording system.

## SHOOT FROM THE LIP

"So we won't be entering the console market in the UK. The games are more expensive and there is no educational benefit"

Commodore UK's managing director speaking to The Independent on Sunday about the biggest mistakes he has made. See page 4 for the full and startling details.

"Now the omnipotent force is the booming UK video games market, word leader Nintendo comes into top gear this month."

According to the office Chambers' English Dictionary, Omnipotency means 'unlimited power' and Omnipotent means 'all powerful'. Maybe the person

who wrote this over-the-top press release should have kept their eye on the recent Nintendo versus Sega/Tiger court case about the Game Genie – which the all powerful Nintendo lost.

"We won't rip up the IBM company in a bad economic cycle. But after six years with one approach... it's time to try another"

IBM's chief executive officer, John Akers explaining his ideas for corporate strategy to his staff following the Apple Computers deal, and before the declaration of a 92 per cent drop in profits for the vast corporation.



## Power savers

How many times have you been sitting, word processing or programming when the power to your computer is suddenly cut before you've saved your work? Now a range of small, uninterferable power supplies (PSPs) has been released to help prevent such events from occurring.

Avet-Lindberg has launched the Microspare range of UPSs which will protect computers from power cuts, sags and surges and other similar unwanted interruptions.

There are three small-sized models which cover L, J and SVA. When power is affected in any of the above ways then the UPS's internal batteries will provide full power cover from between 8 to 15 minutes, depending on the model. And if extra time is needed, external battery packs are available.

To get more details, call Avet on 0708 853444. ■

## Mensa for Amiga users

Matthew Grossman has formed a Commodore Amiga users' group with a difference - this one's for Amiga users with a very high IQ. Not surprisingly, he's called it the Amiga Users Mensa Sig.

The Sig (social interest group) is now operational on the Amiga area of the Compuserve online system. Plans call for the group to produce a paper newsletter and sign up online users across the US and from around the world.

According to Grossman, he's not aiming to form an elitist organisation, an Mensa viewed by many, but merely use the Mensa tag to form a high-powered user group for the Amiga. Because of this, he allows members with IQ levels lower than 140 to join the user group as associate members.

Contact: Matthew Grossman, PO Box 275, Silverdale, NY 12159, USA. E-mail: 73367.3051@compuserve.com or Computer or User Usenet, at 73367.3051@compuserve.com.

## Commodore's Steve Franklin gives candid interview

# C64GS IS A DISASTER!

"I'm sorry, we cocked it up in the UK". So says Commodore's (UK) managing director Steve Franklin in an interview with the Independent on Sunday.

During the interview Franklin slammed the C64GS as "absolutely disastrous". He also stated that his company "... would not be entering the console market in the UK".

Franklin handed his said about various mistakes which he has made since joining the company in 1987. Asked what his biggest mistake had been, he replied: "... trying to sell home

computer packages containing non-computer-related products". Then he gave a list of three specific examples:

- The C64GS - Franklin is particularly pointed about the stripped down version of Commodore's highly successful 8-bit C64. "We were under a bit of pressure because consoles have taken off in America. So we took our C64 computer, designed a plastic mould round it to look like a console, and manufactured 80,000 for the UK market, retailing at £39. We spent £150,000 on marketing



• Steve Franklin, managing director of Commodore owns up to some mistakes in his corporate region.

and again it was absolutely disastrous; we sold about 15,000.

- Packaging British Airways Air Miles vouchers with the £495 Air Miles summer Amiga bundle. The £499 package included Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, Starry from Logotron, Newton's Notebook, and the Spitz paint package from Best Publishing. According to Franklin: "We bought enough the Miles for 25,000 packages (£120,000 worth to be exact) and we spent about £100,000 on advertising. It was a disaster; I think we sold 5,000 in total".

- The 25,000 C64 Home Entertainment pack which was bundled with guitar synthesizers and personal servers. "It was another disaster. We sold about 7,000", said Franklin.

However, a stroke of historical luck enabled the company to get out of the personal servers. "When the Berlin Wall came down, the first thing they wanted to buy was personal servers. There was a great shortage, so we managed to get rid of them," said Franklin.

This did leave some 18,000 guitar synths sitting in the warehouses, though. ■

## FRANKLIN REPLIES

Speaking about the interview, Franklin told Express: "Most people jeha took part in the regular series of interviews; only admitted to one mistake. I talked about three. I did not do us any harm. In fact I think that some other people in the industry could get some good from it. After all, if you make mistakes (but remain as profitable as Commodore), then you should talk about them, you should learn from them."

In terms of the Commodore's plans for the C64 and console, he was equally positive: "We have decided not to go ahead with the console. However, there are some very, very exciting plans for the C64 lines computer this Christmas. I can't comment on them further, but they are probably the most exciting plans for the machine in five years".

## Pocket full of tricks

By using Andert's Pocket Modem, the Distributed Information Processing (DIP) Pocket PC and Atari Portfolio can now communicate with any other modem-equipped computer.

The Pocket Modem was designed specifically for both these computers and connects to their expansion ports. It uses the battery power of the machines, so no external power supplies are needed. Communications software comes with the modem that provides VT52, VT100 and Teletype terminal emulations, and enables file transfers with the Kermit, Xmodem and ASCII protocols. The modem itself is 860T approved and can operate at the CITT V23 and V22



speeds, that is, 300 and 1,200 baud.

DIP is selling a package that includes the Pocket Modem, Pocket PC, 32K memory card, carrying case and spare batteries for £489.94. This offer is only available until September 30. For further details, call DIP on 0483 305555. ■

## Reds get under the text

The latest version of ORFO, a Russian grammar and spelling checker, is now available for the PC. It has been developed by Polytechnic of the USSR, and Natural Language Tools, US.

Version 2.3 has, amongst other features, an improved way of adding words to the checker. The highly effective nature of the Russian language means that most Russian words have many more different forms from the equivalent English word. By answering three or four questions, a single word can be added to the word list and will be

checked to see if it conflicts with other words. Then, when a user wants to replace one word form with another, only a single form has to be chosen.

The grammar and spelling checker is compatible with many word processors, including Word Perfect and Microsoft Word. It also features a three million word dictionary, made up of 200,000 word stems. The program requires a PC with more than 640K and a hard disk with at least 1MB free.

ORFO is available from English Software, on 0223 248916. ■

## It's the Monster mash

The Monster Stereo Sampler for the ST comes from the same people who produced the Monster Stereo Cartridge.

It is able to sample from a domestic CD player, a personal stereo or HiFi. Once captured, sounds can be modified in true stereo. Because of some innovative programming techniques, the Monster makes little call on memory. For example, owners of 520K machines will have 425K in which to store samples.

The product also features real-time altering compression which enables users to sample at high frequencies, then crunch the resulting data by up to ten

times while retaining clarity.

It can also automatically split large samples and save them on several disks. If you have 2MB worth of sample, it can save 850K on one disk, then format another two and save the remaining data on three.

Aside from these extras it has all the standard sampling functions including full volume control, screen cross fade, pan, oscilloscopes and output in mono or stereo. The program also makes extensive use of the S12264 chip.

There's no price yet, but it's likely to be under £80. For info ring MPW 0603 530382. ■

## Speedy Amiga hard drives

Proter has released the A500HD line of hard drives for the Amiga 500 which, the company claims, are up to five times faster than Commodore's A590.

The basic model, which is a 20Mb drive, costs £275, while at the top of the range is a 160Mb model priced at £339. RAM memory can be expanded up to 640k on all of the drives, while cache memory can also be added, to speed up data throughput further.

Architecturally, the A500HD is like the A590 and many of its other features are similar as well. A SCSI port is included to enable the daisy-chaining of SCSI peripherals, such as other hard drives or tape back up units.

For games players, a switch on the drive fools games software into thinking the drive isn't there - often many games don't like having a hard drive connected.

Proter can be contacted on 0923 54133. ■



## You'll just lap this one up!

Amstrad is launching two upgraded versions of its ALT laptop PCs. It is also cutting the price of the existing models.

The new machines will be on sale as you read this in the following configurations: ALT-286 with 40Mb hard drive at a price of £1,879.82. The ALT-386SX with 20Mb of RAM and an 80Mb hard disk which costs £2,348.82.

Price cuts for the older versions are as follows: the 40Mb hard drive 386SX falls from £2,348.82 to £1,996.32, while the 20Mb 286 drops from £1,879.82 to £1,526.32. ■

Express exclusive - Amstrad's new launches expected in September

# THE PCW IS REBORN

Amstrad is to launch two new PCWs, the 9512 Plus and the 9256. It is also to kill off the 8000 range of machines, the 8256 and 8512. Express can exclusively reveal.

### 3.5-INCH DRIVES

Although few details are available as yet, a spokesman for Amstrad's public relations company, Michael Joyce Associates told Express: "The new machines are the 9512 Plus and the 9256. The main changes to the range will be that the 3-inch drives will be dropped in favour of Sony standard 3.5-inch drives manufactured by Götter. There will also be a new styling".

While final release dates for the machines have not been confirmed, it is expected that the Business Computing '91 Exhibition in September will be the venue for the launch.

### ONE ALREADY SIGHTED

It is known the machines are well past the development stages, and are already in production awaiting final shipment early in 1992. One development machine has already been seen in the UK.

The main change to the PCW, the

addition of 3.5-inch disk drives, is not unexpected. The 3-inch floppy drives used in the older PCWs, and also used in the Amstrad CPC and Spectrum ranges, have been in short supply for well over a year. Far Eastern manufacturers have turned production lines over to the 3.5-inch versions which are commonly used in PCs, Macs, STs and Amigas.

### CP/M RETAINED

In terms of software support, the compatibility CP/M operating system, seen by most people in the industry as archaic but having been retained about in its latest version. This version is able to support both the new floppies, and hard drives.

Prices for the new machines have not, as yet, been confirmed.

Bundled software, according to the spokesman: "... will be LotusScript which will be loaded from disk".

### YES, WE HAVE NO COMMENT

Locomotive Software's technical director, Richard Clayton, offered a strong "No comment" on the possibility of a Locomotive/Amstrad collaboration on the new machines. "If Amstrad was launching new machines, and we were working on

## Detailed: the new PCWs

Although both Amstrad and its press and public relations company were reticent about commenting definitively on the exact specifications of the new PCWs, we have been able to track down the basic details which are as follows:

- Two new machines - the 9512 Plus and the 9256
- Both machines will have space for two 720K 3.5-inch drives produced by Citron.
- The 9512 Plus will come with a parallel/Centronics interface to take a daisywheel printer.
- The 9256 will have a custom interface to take an as yet unnamed "captive printer".
- Both machines with paper-white screens.
- Both machines will retain Digital Research's CP/M operating system. However this will be configured to a new version which might mean that programs such as Mini Office Professional will not run in its present state.
- The version of the CP/M operating system adopted for the new PCWs supports both the 3.5 and 5.25-inch drive configurations and hard drives.

them then we would not be able to comment," he explained.

A spokesman for Michael Joyce Associates said: "The decision as to when to launch the machines has not been made. And, although this is unconfirmed, post-September looks likely".

### IT'S GOODBYE TO THE 8000S

So what is there in terms of the future, or lack of it, for the 8256 and 8512 PCWs the spokesman for Michael Joyce Associates told Express:

"It looks as if the 8000 series is being dropped". ■

## From PCW to PC and back again

Not only has the news broken that two new PCWs are on the way, both with 3.5-inch drives, but co-incidentally, it has been announced that Locomotive has upgraded its LoadLink software.

LoadLink enables users of PCs and PCWs to transfer text files between their respective machines.

In the case of LoadScript and LoadScript PC files this means that you can reformat the formatting codes, such as italics

and emboldening, so laboriously placed in the text.

The new bundle comes with 'disk management' software and a cable which fits into the PCW's expansion slot and the PC's printer port.

When both machines are connected via the cable each can see the other as a disk drive and thus transfer the data.

Price is £29.95, or £14.95 for an upgrade.

Locomotive Software is on 0306 740066. ■

## Sound investment

While most people think the Amiga's sound capabilities are already very good, they can now be improved even further with Omega Project's Sound Enhancer.

The Sound Enhancer is a hardware add-on that uses a filtering system to boost the Amiga sound chip's high frequencies, bypassing the low-pass filter which is fitted to standard in all Amigas.

The result, in terms of sound quality, is a flat frequency response between 8 and 20KHz which, the company claims, improves all types of Amiga music.

Omega Project demonstrated a prototype of the Sound Enhancer at the 16-bit Show, and it is now available commercially for £49.95.

To get further details call Omega Projects on 0329 783946. ■



## It's cool for DATs

It just won't lay down and die! Sony's Digital Audio Tape (DAT) has found a new incarnation in the form of DOS (Digital Data Storage).

DOS cartridges now come in two formats: 2 gigabytes worth of data storage on 90 metres of tape, or 1.302s worth on 60 metres. The carts don't need to be formatted and are supported by Wang, Sun, XJ, and DEC among others. For more information call Sony on 0794 467000. ■

## NIBBLES

## Scan with your Arc

DT Software has packaged two Epson flatbed scanners for use with the Archimedes.

The two scanners are Epson's GT-4000 and GT-6000 which come with custom high-speed parallel interfaces. The GT-4000 can scan at up to 480 dots per inch (dpi) and costs £1,299, while the GT-6000 can scan at 600 dpi and is £2,699.

DT Software can be reached on 0223 841099.

## New Arche ranges

Computer manufacturer Arche has launched two new product ranges.

The Windows Power Series is a range of 386SX and 386SX machines specifically designed to run Microsoft Windows. And the other new range, the Arche 32 Series, consists of 286 and 386SX models which include a single 3.5-inch drive, 1Mb of RAM and VGA graphics.

For more info, call Arche on 0462 862700.

## Microsoft books

Microsoft Press has announced five new titles, all based upon the latest version of MS-DOS, version 5.0.

The books are: *Running MS-DOS*, *Running MS-DOS (MSBAC)*, *MS-DOS (MSBAC) Programming Reference*, *MS-DOS Quick Reference*, and *MS-DOS Batch Files Quick Reference*.

To get more information, contact Microsoft on 0734 381123.

## Mac-in-DOS

A new version of Mac-in-DOS.

The program that translates data between the Macintosh and PC, has been released by Pacific Micro in the US.

It can now run under Windows 3.0 and, claims the company, is able to format hard disks in a PC drive. Text, binary and graphics files can also be exchanged between the two formats.

Pacific Micro can be reached on 0101-475-948-6300.

## A million in 3D

Demtek has announced that 3D Constructive Kit has broken the £1 million mark.

This figure is based on retail sales of the product in both the UK and Europe. The Constructive Kit version, which was launched at the end of July, does not figure in the amount, and the company expects sales of the product on this machine will further increase the sum.

Demtek can be called on 080-750 2222.

## Offenders named in Parliament

In his seventh annual report to Parliament, the data protection registrar, Eric Howe, has named companies which have been prosecuted for contravention of the Data Protection Act 1984.

Mr Howe said: "I gave fair warning that I would begin naming organisations who were prosecuted. During the 12 months to 31 May 1991, covered in the report, 17 organisations were taken to court and all but three were found guilty and fined. Surprisingly, well-known names are among the offenders and publishing these should encourage others to ensure conformance with the requirements of the Act."

The organisations included Levi Strauss (UK) Ltd, the Church of Scientology, The Spectator (US) and Leicester City Council. The Football Association was also taken

to court but the jury gave it a conditional discharge for two years. The Halifax Building Society was also investigated, but the jury was divided by the judge to acquit.

Also mentioned in the report is the concern of the registrar about the security and confidentiality of individual health records as they pass through the massive National Health Service computer system.

Howe was scathing about the state of the health system's computer policy. "The department of health has not supported a statutory strengthening of the data protection principles in respect of medical confidentiality," he said.

However, he continued in more optimistic vein: "The department of health is working on draft regulatory guidance. My staff are already contributing to a Council of



• Data protection registrar Eric Howe's report to Parliament was scathing about lapses in the security and confidentiality of the national health system's computer records.

Europe working party, which is considering appropriate safeguards for personal health information". ■

## Novell repels takeover bid by joining Digital Research

## MERGER MANIA FOR PC MARKET

The PC market is going merger mad. This week's corporate conference involves Novell and Digital Research (DR).

DR, responsible for the first personal computer operating system standard, CP/M, and also for DR DOS, is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of Novell.

Although the deal has been agreed in principle by both boards of directors, the final details have to be agreed by Digital Research shareholders. Once this has been approved, it is expected that the conclusive agreement will be signed in October.

In the event that DR shareholders oppose the bid, the company has promised to pay Novell an undisclosed sum in compensation.

Novell, which is the market leader in the production of Local Area Networking (LAN) equipment, is rumored to be under threat from a takeover bid from software giant Microsoft.

Novell has been selling great store by DR's DOS capabilities. In a press release to announce the deal, its chief executive proclaimed: "Novell is welcoming a talented organisation with technology leadership not only in DOS products, but also forward



• The PC market is subject to more over-takes than the India 500 of the moment. Last week it was Perkin and Ashton Tate, this week, it's Novell and Digital Research.

looking expertise in multitasking and graphical user interface technology."

The deal with Digital Research could mean that Novell has some insurance against any hostile

bids from Microsoft. The reason for this is that Novell will hold an IBM compatible operating system in the form of DR DOS, which currently has an estimated 15 per cent of the market. ■

## Wanted: Sam Coupé demos

It is not just Amiga owners who get the chance to enter high-profile competitions for graphics and sound productions. Now users of the Sam Coupé have a chance to show off their prowess.

Chetron Software, which publishes the Outlet disk magazine (see the Spectrum machine specific column on page 20 for more info), is offering £100 for the best graphics and/or sound demos for the Sam.

Outlet is offering £10 prizes for each demo published and the first prize will go to the demo the editors of Outlet like best.



• Not just the sun old story, 3-50 owners can win heaps of cash prizes in a four-related challenge.

Send your entries to: Chetron Software, 605 Loughborough Road, Bland, Leicester LE4 4PL. ■

## It's just a token

Pikegroup Communication Systems claims that it will take only four minutes to install and set up its Model 1201 Token Ring network adaptor card in a PC.

The card is suitable for 4Mb or 6Mb per second Token Ring networks complying with the IEEE 802.3 and 802.5 standards.

The adaptor card comes with software that configures it to suit the specifications of the computer



it is used on.

According to the company, the size and low power consumption of the card enable it to be used in laptops as well as desktop PCs. The Model 1201 is available now for around £495. For more information, call Pikegroup on 0745 568224. ■

Games houses and distributors blame each other

# 8-BIT SOFTWARE PRICES TO RISE

Owners of 8-bit machines beware, the minimum price for budget games is set to become £3.99 across the board this month.

Confusion reigns over the reasons for this, with software houses blaming retailers and distributors, and vice versa.

To add to the mix-mash of opinion, independent dealers are unhappy with the possible rise and are apparently pressuring the software houses into retaining the £1.99 and £2.99 prices currently available.

The public, who may now have to pay more for their software, won't benefit from the increase — in fact things could get worse. As far as original produced software is concerned, cofounder of Code Masters, Richard Darling believes: "There will be less opportunities for try-

ing original and off the wall games. For example, we would be more reluctant to try Rock Star New York Hunter at £3.99."

Virgin Games marketing director, Andy Wright, concurs: "Developing original stuff is no longer possible. It is now a re-



• Will they still produce games like *Shinobi* when the prices go up?

lease market".

Julian Jones, a spokesman for Players, responsible for such games as Prison Riot, believes: "The distributors are trying to push old stuff on to the public. We have got to do what the distributors want to do. Distributors call the tune and there is no way you can break that barrier between the software company and the public down."

A spokesman for John Manners, however, takes the opposite view: "From now all 8-bit budget software will be on sale for £3.99 unless provided. Most software companies are recommending the £3.99 price."

Mr Smith is more radical still. It has stated in the industry press that it will sell all 8-bit budget games at £3.99, regardless of the recommended retail price from the manufacturer. Another



• There will be less opportunities for trying original and off the wall games," says Richard Darling, cofounder of Code Masters.

major outlet, Boots, has decided to stock only £3.99 games.

Do you have any views on the possible rise in prices? If so air your views by writing to No 8-bit Price Rise, New Computer Express, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. ■



• Owners of Fun with a compilation label called *Addicted to Fun*. The first bundle under this title was *Fun and Bob* returning to the shelves.

## Just say no?

Great is to launch a new games label to deal with compilations.

Called *Addicted to Fun*, the first release under its aegis will comprise *Rainbow Islands*, *New Zealand Story*, and *Double Bubble*, all of which received critical acclaim on their original releases. The compilation will be called *The Rainbow Collection* and will cost £19.99 for the ST and £14.99 for the C64, CPC, and Spectrum.

According to Grant, now *Addicted to Fun* packages will follow, and they will all be themed. ■

## Animated antics

JCL has released AnimAde, an upgrade for its ColourPic and SuperPic video digitisers that lets users dabble in the art of animation.

AnimAde is a combined RAM expansion card, time marker unit and supporting software that enables the digitisers to produce animations that take up a quarter of the Amiga's screen. These can be arranged from images taken from sources such as a video camera or VCR (video cassette recorder).

Recordings can be made in real-time, or if the images are to be used as individual frames, in single steps. The time marker enables short sequences of images to be joined together to create longer productions.

The images are stored in Amiga's own RAM, and once seen by the user they can be converted to RT files to be used in other packages. The RAM also means that digitised still images can be made in both over-sampled and interlaced graphics modes, which offer better resolution and colours.

AnimAde is available as an add-on for Amiga users who already own a JCL digitiser at a cost of £150. Alternatively, can be bought ready-fitted to either the ColourPic or SuperPic digitisers, for £249 and £649 respectively.

JCL is on 0882 75791. ■

## Rhapsody II in blue

Archimedes owners with a musical bent may be pleased to know that *Rhapsody II*, the latest version of the *Rhapsody* music program, is now available.

It has several new features, including MIDI thru, and best facilities and support for up to 64 MIDI channels, as well as upgraded editing tools. Formatted scores will be available later in the year. *Rhapsody II* is available now from Clares for £61.95. Owners of the first version can upgrade for £15.95. To find out more, call 0636 48511. ■

## Deus ex machina

Amiga owners looking for enlightenment can now turn to *NeuroLink's Context Bible*, which has recently been reduced in price.

The Bible has been reduced from £120 (£72.73) to \$50 (£30.30) to bring the Good Book to more people. It comes on a total of 17 disks, but can be installed on a hard disk to avoid a lot of disk swapping.

One version of the computerized Bible combines with *Thinker*, a hypertext program, which costs \$100 (£60.61). This makes *Context Bible* accessible to Bible study classes as words and verses can be found and cross-referenced with ease.

*Context Bible* is only available from NeuroLink in Texas, USA. It can be contacted on 010-1406-793-0423. ■

## Icon do that

For Amiga users of multimedia presentation packages, such as *AmigaVision* and *Cardo*, and those problems with drawing from their hard disk.

AmigaVision has released the *Interface Design Kit*.

The package consists of four disks that contain over 500 site art images to use in those programs. Some of the images include mathematical symbols, icons, clipart, music, printer and document icons.

Because there are so many images in the package, the manual is an essential companion, as it explains where they all are on the disks.

The *Interface Design Kit* is available now from distributor Checkmate Digital. For more info, call 071-424 2808. ■

## Objects to open Windows

March Systems has released *Advanced Easy Windows*, a development tool for the Windows graphic user interface (GUI). The new program is an extension of the *Easy Windows* object oriented programming tool, and includes several additional features.

The package is designed for producing Windows applications and enables applications to be designed and modified, so the company claims, without the need for learning a new programming language.

It consists of several different 'modules', including the management, a library of programming 'objects', standard query language (SQL) database, and an 'inheritance' feature which can import features from other files created by the package.

*Advanced Easy Windows* can run on any PC running Windows and costs £399.

Owners of *Easy Windows* can upgrade to the advanced version for £299. For more information, call March Systems on 0734 404079. ■



• Windows users who want to program applications can now use *Advanced Easy Windows*, an object oriented development tool and an extension of *Easy Windows*.

## You can ring my bell...

The Co-Access voice mail system from Boston Technologies is unlike any other voice mail system in existence. It is designed to handle a large number of calls and any incoming line from any subscriber.

Other voice mail systems are limited in that they have only a certain number of colour-coding processors, and if the lines are busy or a processor is tied up then the caller usually can't leave a message.

One of the features in the recently patented system is digital switching. The system is controlled by a central computer which routes a network of smaller processing computers which can in turn both store and retrieve telephone messages.

Voice mail systems such as these are sold in the US mainly to telephone companies.

Call Boston Technologies on 01014172 499000.

## Network chips in

The first single-chip Ethernet network controller, named the ST-ENC, has been released by National Semiconductor. While three chips are needed before the network interface controller, media access controller and the network transceiver are on the one chip, using only a quarter of the central processor.

# TOMORROW'S CUTTING EDGE

Technology is forever moving ahead in leaps and bounds. How can we keep up with it all? Easy – read this page

## Disk-cover the world

Now you can forget flicking through travel brochures to plan your *Satellite* travels. Travel author Les Foster has combined forces with Boston Documentation Design to produce the first travel guides on a disk, for the PC.

The advantages of doing this are numerous. By the time travel information gets published it is often out of date. Now, updating this information is as easy as changing data on a floppy disk, so, in theory, the latest information should always be available.

Also, computer disks are comparatively smaller than travel books to carry around and store, and if information is required on paper, it can be printed out.

Currently there are five disks available in the range. They are called, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, California Travel to more



• Mouse eye eye to belly travel guides. Now PC users can find out how to get to Disneyland with the help of disks such as *California Travel*.

general guide to the Golden State, Western US, Travel Sampler US and Travel Sampler Worldwide. They each retail for \$39.95 (US\$21).

All the information is text-only at the moment but methods of adding photographs are being looked into. The text information

is accessible through a Hyperstyle program which can cross-reference and display the different information.

Once pictures are added, and other places are covered, it won't be long before there are no longer overflowing with unwanted 18-30 Holiday brochures, as

## Time for the transputer?

Many large US computer companies, including Cray, IBM and Intel are predicting that 1993 will be the year of the transputer supercomputer. However, Parasytec, a German company, expects to produce such a machine much sooner.

The supercomputer is capable of processing at speeds of up to a teraflop (one million million instructions per second). Parasytec claims that its Grand Challenge computer, which is capable of processing just as fast, will be ready by 1993.

The machine will be based on the T9000 transputer-based processors which can be connected in parallel to each other in large numbers. And as more of them are added, the processing power is proportionally increased.

The Grand Challenge computer is expected to have 65,000 such processors.

The claims made by the German company seem a little on the optimistic side as, at the moment, a production version of the T9000 processor has not yet been demonstrated. And the Grand Challenge is still in the drawing boards.

The machine is not being regarded as more vapourware than the company has already sold six smaller computers of a similar design which use only 64 processors.

## Who's a pretty polychrome?

Computer users are using colour more and more often, but to get this colour from the monitor screen to paper has long been a problem. Until now...

Colour dot matrix and laser printers are fine for putting basic polychrome images on to hard copy, but for serious, genuinely photographic printing, there hasn't been any suitable technology around.

Now a new technology has been developed which scientists believe will offer huge improvements in the printing technologies available today.



• Generally colour ink jet printers such as Sharp's JX-720 are one of the best ways of getting fast, reasonable colour output, but they could soon be superseded by new Japanese-developed colour printing technology.

and it is predicted that it will be ready for mass production in a couple of years.

The new technology has been developed by five scientists at the Nikon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT) company in Japan.

Besides colour printers, the technology lends itself to colour photocopiers and fax machines. The photocopier is expected to sell for a quarter of the price of current colour photocopiers. The colour fax machine will be able to send a full-colour photograph about 13 times as fast and ten times as clearly as the machines now on the market.

Colour images have been considerably improved by the new method. While its resolution is currently only 200 dots per inch (dpi), which is less than a standard laser printer, the new technology has yet unveiled can print each dot in almost 17 million different shades and intensities.

All this information would take up a lot of memory, but the Japanese scientists have worked out a way to compress the data so as to be able to send it at roughly a page a minute across digital telephone lines.

Apart from the fact that the system is only in its infancy, there are a couple of other drawbacks to it. Firstly, it uses liquid toner unlike the powdered ink that current photocopiers use, which could make changing toner cartridges messy. And secondly, the new process can only print on to a special type of paper. At the moment it is not known whether it will eventually be able to print on normal photocopy paper.

## Power of the written word

Are the days of the cumbersome keyboard, and the mawkish mouse numbered? Apparently so as, pen-based computing is becoming increasingly accepted. This state of affairs has yet again been affirmed by the fact that another company has announced its intention to support a pen-based operating system.

Software Publishing is planning to develop applications for Go Computer's Penpoint operating system (V/S) (see Express 129 for more information). Penpoint enables data to be input by writing with an electronic 'pen' on a touch sensitive monitor screen, it is designed to interpret the user's handwriting, in order to turn common cursive into control codes

that the computer understands.

The company has adopted the Q/S because it feels that Penpoint uses memory more efficiently than conventional desktop systems.

Professional Writer Plus, the company's pen-compatible document processor runs without modification under the new PenWindows extension to Microsoft's Windows graphic user interface (GUI).

Software Publishing is looking into making enhancements to its other products to run under PenWindows as well as Go's Penpoint.

As more and more software companies adopt pen-point operating systems it shouldn't be long before the hardware manufacturers do the same.



• Back to the future – will we be handwriting our input into machines like the HCR 2125 instead of typing it in?



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STARTER KIT - £29.95  
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- Superior Graphics - 240x256dpi
- FREE Starter Kit

RPP £252.58  
STARTER KIT - £29.95  
TOTAL RPP: £282.53  
SILICA PRICE: £179.95  
SILICA PRICE: £179.95

**192 CPS DRAFT 9 PIN**



## SWIFT 9 - COLOUR!

The Citizen Swift 9 is perfect for those who require high quality dot matrix black or colour printing at a budget price. The price of Swift 9 makes it the ideal manufacturer's 24-pin value.

- 9-pin Impact Printer
- Print Speed 192cps Draft
- 3 BOLD Fonts (48dpi)
- Epson & IBM Graphics Emulation
- Advanced Paper Parking
- FREE Starter Kit
- FREE Colour Kit

RPP £264.85  
STARTER KIT - £29.95  
TOTAL RPP: £294.80  
SILICA PRICE: £189.95  
SILICA PRICE: £189.95

**192 CPS DRAFT 24 PIN**



## SWIFT 24 - COLOUR!

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- Print Speed 192cps Draft
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- BK Buffer
- Epson, IBM & NEC Piv+ Emulation
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- FREE Starter Kit
- FREE Colour Kit

RPP £304.85  
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To: Silica Systems, Dept HSC 080, SE 1-4 The Works, Haverley Rd, Sedgely, Kent, SA1 4JH

## PLEASE SEND CITIZEN PRINTER INFORMATION

Mr/Ms/Ms: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (Home): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel (Work): \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Which computer(s), if any, do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

©1993 - All rights reserved. Prices and specifications may change. Please check the prices in the latest catalogue.

## Dinky dual drive

**PRODUCT:** Combined 3.5/5.25 inch floppy drive  
**NAME:** All Media Floppy  
**COMPATIBILITY:** PC

Fitting into the space of a normal half-height drive, Data Peripherals' All Media Floppy can take both 3.5 and 5.25-inch disk drives.

It is compatible with the existing disk formats such as the 720K and 1.44Mb 3.5-inch, and 360K and 1.2Mb 5.25-inch disks. The drive comes with a standard floppy drive interface for the PC with a simple data connector.

Instead of using the disk eject lever which is common to 5.25-inch drives, the All Media Floppy uses a push button for ejecting disks – as seen in all good 3.5-inch versions.

All present the drive is only available in bulk quantities to dealers and manufacturers. However, once it filters down through the distribution channels, it should become commonly available to all PC users will be able to get hold of them.

**Price:** £139.70 for L1, £104 each per 100, £87 each per 3,000 (dealer prices only)

**Availability:** Only through dealers

**Target users:** Computer manufacturers and individual PC users

**Contact:** Data Peripherals: 0785 57050

**Perceived competition:** The company believes there is no competition; the product is unique.



• Floppy drives are still scarce. Take this little baby which manages to save space and still look good. What could it be for you?

## Share your server

**PRODUCT:** File server software  
**NAME:** DataClub 2.0  
**COMPATIBILITY:** Macintosh

Gemtek has released version 2.0 of International Business Software's DataClub file server software for the Mac. The company claims it will improve performance by more than 500 per cent.

DataClub 2.0 runs System 6 and the Mac's latest operating system (OS/7). On System 7 it also supports the new Q/D's features such as Balloon Help and the TrueType font standard.

The product's 'Virtual Server' feature lets machines on a network share resources such as disk storage and server processing, and access them through a single icon on each machine. Not only can files be accessed in this way but it also makes backing up data easier.

DataClub's 'locked' feature has also been improved to prevent certain folders from being opened by other Macintoshes on the network.

**Price:** £199 for three users

# WHAT'S NEW

From disk drives to plotters they're all here in fact filled details

## Moveable media mechanism

**PRODUCT:** Bernoulli removable disk storage  
**NAME:** Bernoulli 90 drive  
**COMPATIBILITY:** PC, Mac

Imaging claims that its Bernoulli 90 is the first 90Mb removable disk storage system for the PC and Macintosh. The drive is based on the company's Bernoulli mechanism which uses removable disk cartridges in much the same way that normal floppy disks are used.

Each disk can store up to 90Mb of data, and the drive is also compatible with the older Bernoulli 44Mb disks.

The Bernoulli 90's average access time is 27 milliseconds and it has a data transfer rate of up to 50Mbytes per second. The drive also has a 32K cache memory to further speed up data transfer.

Handily for the less lucky (or more clumsy user) the hard disk has built-in protection against damage to the magnetic media which actually stores the data. If the Bernoulli 90 is dropped or has something dropped on it, the magnetic media inside falls away from the head. Theoretically at least, this saves the disk from any radical, physical damage.

**Price:** Transportable 90-£288.42  
 Dual version: £794.62



• Imaging's Bernoulli removable 90 drive lets you fit 90Mb on a single disk, and also protects itself from shock events such as being dropped on the floor.

**Removable disk:** £197.28

**Availability:** New

**Target users:** "No one specific – up to dealers"

**Contact:** Imaging Corporation: 081-608 7171

**Perceived competition:** Other hard disk and removable disk manufacturers such as Syquest, Ricoh.

version; £540 for ten

user version

**Availability:** August 1991

**Target users:** Small businesses and sites that have from three users upwards

**Contact:** Gemtek: 071-731 7930

**Perceived competition:** Personal File Share, TOPS

## Database discounts

**PRODUCT:** Database package  
**NAME:** Delta Five Release 2.0  
**COMPATIBILITY:** PC

Action Computer Supplies has put together a package that comprises CompuLink's Delta Five Release 2.0 database and Delta Five Graph, a

presentation package, all for £426.

Normally, the database at its own costs £595, while the presentation package is £295.

Delta Five is a non-relational database for the PC. It features 'form fill' techniques, supports networking and relational and transitional file structures.

The presentation package, Delta Five Graph, can then display the databases created with Delta Five in a number of ways, such as pie charts and bar graphs.

**Price:** £426  
**Availability:** Now (special offer until 30 September)  
**Target users:** Any potential PC database users

**Contact:** Action: 0600 333333

**Perceived competition:** Other databases such as dBase and Paradox, which the company also stocks.



• CompuLink 240C is the company's first machine to use AMD's 486MHz processor, which might come as a shock to its previous suppliers, the mighty Intel.

## Clone offering

**PRODUCT:** Desktop PC  
**NAME:** CompuLink 240C  
**COMPATIBILITY:** PC

CompuLink has released its first machine based on AMD's 486MHz 386 clone processor. Apart from offering the 40MHz processing speed, the machine comes with 4Mb of RAM, 128K of cache memory, an 80Mb hard disk drive and Super VGA colour graphics.

It comes in desktop or tower case configurations and has six expansion slots available. Two floppy drives are also included, a 3.5-inch and a 5.25-inch.

**Price:** £2,099

**Availability:** Now

**Target users:** Corporate users, UNIX applications, file sharing, CAD/CAM

**Contact:** CompuLink: 0256 395531

**Perceived competition:** Any company offering a 486MHz machine and 486s.

## Fun solutions get productive results

Computing isn't all fun. In fact, sometimes things can go drastically wrong.

To make these life-altering events a bit easier to manage, Accodata has produced Solutions to Office Problems, a brochure that uses cartoon illustrations to outline what can go wrong and what to do about it. These include such things as possible dangers from prolonged exposure to glare from VDU screens, the effects of printer noise and how to cope with a limited work space.

This is not merely an act of charity however, as Accodata shows how its products can help solve the problems. The brochure also explains new EC directives on minimum health and safety standards for furniture and equipment in the workplace, and how to comply with them.





# TROJAN



**PHAZER**

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## EXPRESS MAIL

Welcome to letters pages that get you thinking

This week, Hayden Fitz-Williams prints your points on the CDTV challenge to CDi, takes your tips on a new program for the ST and a Cyber/virtual reality magazine venture and listens to advice on console costs. Plus your chance to put a question to top industry figures

### Format fight

In response to your response to Adam Wright's letter in Express 148 not only is the David v Goliath debate a parallel, but also the forthcoming C3i v CDTV 'war' could well be paralleled by the Boleyn versus W5 battle. Everyone agreed that Boleyn was better, but who won?

Even though CDTV is limited by the Amiga structure there are signs that C3i may be about £150 compared to the CDTV's expected price tag of around £160, which means that many people will go for the cheaper magazine. The other big point in its favour is that CDTV will very probably appear in retail shops very soon (as did WH&R).

I was amazed to read that Sam Trueman thinks Atari can just 'quote' below the Amiga away, one is very much under the impression

that Atari would have difficulty blowing a piece of paper away! I would be very much interested in seeing Sam Trueman substantiate these claims.

For those of you out there who don't have the luck to read Amiga Format, I will inform you that it ran a survey. When the readers were asked 'Would you like to upgrade your Amiga system to run CDTV software?', over 100,000 people said 'yes', which could well mean over 100,000 potential CDTV buyers.

Readers should also note that Commodore is working on a CDTV drive for the Amiga (a CD can hold 550MB compared to a 80MB disk).

My point is - no offense, but what sort of a name is Hayden Fitz-Williams? It sounds like a name a Lord would have and the chance of an Express Mail man being able to disguise is 4 per cent.

P Young, Derbyshire

WHAT A PITY that such a balanced informative letter is spoiled by the thinly disguised slur on a fine name and lineage. The name is Welsh-Irish, the man is proto-Germanic and had you perused the appropriate journals you would see that the Fitz-Williams line does in fact have its roots firmly dug into the sharp end of over 40 generations of innovators, inventors and champions of the advancement of science.

Who was quietly constructive in quelling the Luddite rebellion? It surely wasn't some one from Derbyshire of the name Young, it was an F-W.

### Cyberman

Many months ago, I noticed in your line magazine the name and address of a company producing a magazine called The Cyber Times. Sounds right up my street I thought, so I sent them the C3i one year subscription fee and within a couple of weeks received the first issue.

Since that time I have heard nothing despite writing five letters (the last one demanding my money back immediately). What has happened to them? Maybe you or one of your readers know.

Since that time I have decided to get involved in starting my own Cyber/virtual Reality magazine. As far as I know there is no other such publication in existence in the UK at the moment (I stand to

be corrected). So, far makes out there who'd like to know more, drop me a line and I'll send some more details. And we'll not be running off with your money after one issue!

OK, that's it for now. Thanks for making Thursday mornings so enjoyable! Over and out!

Ian Fitchner, Brighton

### WE DON'T KNOW where the Cyber

Times crew is, but we're looking into it. Before we cast our million plus annual readers to the same fate that you've suffered in the hands of Cyber Times, we want to see examples of what you have on offer. If it makes the grade, we'll pass on your address to our readers. If it's less than great, we won't.

### ST star program

I recently received my copy of The Chamberlain a program written by a young German and in my opinion this is the best and most vital yet written for the ST.

What it does is to load itself as a desk accessory (DA) and you can then call up any DA at any time through the file selector. So in effect you could have a separate disk with 100 DAs and call any when needed and it only takes up 5K of memory.

Imagine what this means to the person who has an ST with the basic memory, no more worry over the six DA limit and how much memory is eaten up when they are resident. This is definitely the only desk accessory you'll ever own, need.

This had could have made a lot of money with this gem, but it can be given for free by sending a blank disk and two international reply coupons (necessary for overseas). This is important. You should let the regular readers know about this immediately.

St Carnegie, Glasgow

BETTER THAN THAT, our regular readers who have chanced on this issue will be able to join the regulars by applying this line proofing.

However, rather than give out someone's address to our readers, we've passed on the details to a couple of PD libraries so that they can get it in and thoroughly test it for bugs and all range compatibility before letting it loose on an unsuspecting public.

## Cover story catches someone's eye

The cover story of Express 141 on the severe price cut on the OS400 and the Amistive OS4000 caught my eye. So I popped along to the nearest branch of Dixons hoping to pick up a GX4000, figuring that C3i was a reasonable price, even if all I ever did was play Whisker/Robber on it.

Well, no joy in Dixons. A small, but vital fact the article failed to mention was that about two months ago, Dixons slashed the prices of the two cartridges to £29.95 and at that price had sold out of both cartridges and cartridges weeks ago!

Name of the Dixons' branches in Edinburgh had any in stock, nor could they order me one. One of the shop manager's phoned the head office to check whether any of the other stores

nearby had any, and discovered that the only store in Scotland with any GX4000's in stock was in Aberdeen. 150 miles away!

For as item of such minuscule value and non-existent profit margin, Dixons weren't prepared to send one down to the Edinburgh store. Going to Aberdeen to pick one up would cost half as much again as the console!

So thanks for the interesting item - but next time - please try and give us the full story. In the meantime, if anyone knows where I can actually obtain a GX4000, they could might like to contact me via your pages.

Derek Richardson, Edinburgh

country to find out which branch a good deal is available? This is the real world. It was a real story. Don't slip such the GX4000 and it did rate as the bargain of the decade (if you aspired to the Amistive console).

Would you expect us to run several editions of the magazine with an update of how many GX4000s Dixons had sold? What happens if we ring up Dixons and they say 'Yes, it's available in Kirkcaldy' and we print that?

In the ensuing few days I will check and print, the dozens of Kirkcaldy may realise what bargain is close to hand and buy them up when you come marching over the Fife bridge with £20 in your tent and swaggy eye, will you expect us to refund your bus fare? Well we won't.

SO NEXT TIME we run a story based on truth, we must find every store in the



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# AMIGA

- Silica takes on fastest Amiga accelerator card yet
- 256 colour VGA PC emulation comes to the Amiga
- Workbench 3.0 - read the details here!

## SILICA SIZZLERS

If you thought Silica Systems does nothing more than sell Amigas, then think again. It is rapidly becoming one of the UK's most important retailers of Amiga products, ranging from mouse mats to high powered processor cards and graphics boards.

In latest acquisition is the entire range of products from US-based Great Valley Products (GVP) to its friends. At the time of going to press, a few strings had still to be tied up, but Silica is confident that it will be able to offer UK Amiga users the entire range of GVP products by the time you read this.

Previously distributed in this country by Power Computing, GVP produces a vast range of high power expansion products ranging from hard disk controllers, to base streamers and processor accelerators, including the Amiga's fastest accelerator yet, the GVP A3001, all 50MHz of XL.

I was recently lucky enough to be able to have a play with a full spec A3001 50MHz, 640Kb, 4Mb of 32 bit RAM, which I very quickly realised made my Amiga 2000. What a difference it

made! With 1000 Mhz of processing power, my Amiga positively danced through applications. Comparing a standard Amiga to an Amiga equipped with an A3001 is like comparing a Sierra Cosworth to a Fiesta 1.1!

Ray tracing programs showed the most significant speed increase, but most other programs also benefited. In particular, ASD's Art Department Professional was enhanced beyond belief. According to Silica, GVP has become the world's second largest manufacturer of add-on cards for the Amiga, second only to Commodore itself. It's not surprising either - every GVP product I have used and tested has been streets ahead of the competition. They may be expensive, but buying GVP means that you get the best. Silica can be contacted on 081 309 1111.

## ATONCE UPGRADE SOON

Staying at Silica, plans are afoot to release its greatly acclaimed Atonce PC emulator for the Amiga. Although Atonce was technically a very nice little product 100Kb of it never really achieved the kind of mass market penetration that

Silica would have liked.

The company has now taken on many of the criticisms levelled at the original and it hopes to fix the vast majority of these within the new release. Please details are still at little hard to extract from the Silica-based company, but you can rest assured that it'll let you know as soon as it's clear.

Silica itself says, keeping their right lip tied, but a source close to the company revealed to me that one feature that is being looked at is full 256 colour VGA support. It's not quite sure how it intends to achieve this using the Amiga's current video hardware, but its source claims that some extra hardware will be built into the board itself which will work in conjunction with the new enhanced chipset.

What this basically means is that unless you're lucky enough to have an ECS-equipped Amiga which runs all everyone but A3000 owners and developers), you won't be able to use this new board. It is also believed that the new Atonce may not necessarily fit internally inside the Amiga 500.

German developer Martin is looking into the possibility of producing a version of Atonce that plugs into the expansion bus on the Amiga 500. Obviously it will come with a parallel connector, therefore enabling those of you lucky enough to own a hard drive to use both products simultaneously. Although multi-tasking was rather shabby on the first version of Atonce, it will be retained on the upgrade. Phone Silica on 081 309 1111.

## SNIPPETS

● Rumours are rife at the moment concerning a new release of the Amiga operating system. No, we're not talking Workbench 3.0 here - that's old hat now. We are in fact talking Workbench 3.0. Yes folks, the vast majority of it still doesn't exist. Unfortunately, but Commodore is supposedly already working on the next major release. As always, getting information of the new version is like extracting blood from a stone, so we can only speculate as what the new Workbench will offer.

Better support for Compagraphics fonts, especially in the cards, as is support for both virtual RAM (use your hard disk as a RAM disk) and possibly even 24-bit video (for those new custom chips perhaps?) It keeps you excited if I hear news.

● No sooner has Europrint AMOS 3D hit the streets, but the company is already hard at work on an upgrade. According to Koorio Software, the developers of AMOS 3D, work has already started on the upgrade which will push the 3D system further still. Details are rather sketchy, but Wooder claims that the upgrade will speed things up considerably and will allow for far more complex objects to be created.

● Silica certainly doesn't mess about when it comes to new and upgraded products. Look out for very latest for Scale 2, an upgraded ASDOS2 and best of all Art Department Professional 2. The latter boasts many new features, including full support for the new Epson 44 colour scanner plus many new image

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◀ discuss the program, the language and the huge installed base of users. The soundtrack ends several difficult years for Action-Tale.

#### BOOK OF THE MONTH

PageMaker 4.0 is a perfectly splendid DTP program from Aldus. However, it is rather large with a vast array of features. Thus, about 16 million books seem to have been written for it.

I recently received Komari's effort - PageMaker 4.0 for Windows by Willem B. Sanders. This book is aimed more towards the beginner. As such it is nice to see hints and tips on Windows 3.0. I'm sure many PageMaker users will purchase Windows 3.0 just so that they can run PageMaker 4.0.

The book methodically explains each feature while highlighting various 4.0 improvements and additions. Illustrations are scattered throughout. No real focus is given for the likes of Postscript, Pantone, and other technicalities although they are briefly mentioned. However, given the target audience these factors are of no great concern.

Spanning 350 pages printed on relatively low quality paper (which kept the price down) and costing £19.95 PageMaker 4.0 for Windows can be heartily recommended for any PageMaker 4.0 novice. Available in the UK via bookshops, computer stores or from Computer Manuals.

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Paul Rigby

## SPECTRUM

- Budget bargain! Four games for £2.99
- Electronic magazine *Outlet* carries on brilliantly
- Give Dizzy a good poke and make him immortal

#### 4 FOR £3

The Spectrum software scene is well stocked with bargain buys at the moment as middle-aged classics are re-released for a few quid. Original budget games are better than ever and ground breaking stuff like the 3D Construction Kit all sit together on the shop shelves.

But foremost in the value stakes and most worthy of a large red bangle stamp are the budget Quattro compilations. Put together by Code Masters (who else?) these are four game packs based loosely around a common theme and priced at a mere £2.99.

Quattro Racers is one of the latest and offers good value for money and huge amounts of joystick juggling for a small price.

First up there's BMX Simulator 2, a simple yet still so addictive Superprint style overhead viewed race game with nice gimmicks like an action replayed simultaneous free player games!

Graphics and sound belie its budget roots and the option to lead harder courses means you could be playing this one for quite some time.

And you, you'll probably want to have a go at ATV Simulator before long. This is a smoothly done, side view race against the clock as you sit astride an All Terrain Vehicle and attempt to negotiate no end of obstacles. It's endowed with good animation and a fantastic amount of playability.

BMX Freestyle Simulator isn't quite as good and takes a more practice to be able to play with any kind of success as you try your hand at freestyle, jumps, halfpipes, wheelies and such like.

Finally there's Jet Bike Simulator which returns to the overboard race style format of BMX Sim as you speed around a harbour with various watery obstacles and lots of bugs to get round. The inclusion of a simultaneous two player control is a bonus here.

For £2.99, Quattro Racers offers exemplary value for money and more wind blowing through the hair racing action than you'll find anywhere else.

The commercial nature of most of the games reaps joy for all the family, or fun for families at Spicely owing speed freaks and BMXers at any rate.

#### ELECTRONIC ORGAN

With CDS and CDTV, interactive, on-screen magazines could well be a huge entertainment medium in a few years time. So let's not forget the early pioneer of the form, the Dufay drive/tape based organ for the Spectrums. It is retiring its 50th issue and with a birth date of 1987 has to be one of the earliest household publications for any computer. And it's managed to maintain a very high standard for the two years I've been reading it. The two most recent issues, for June and July, both boast a nicely assorted mix of text to read and programs to load which should interest anyone who doesn't use their Spectrums for game playing.

Highlights of the June edition include extra BASIC commands for the +D, an excellent version of Life, the classic computing standard, a SAM to Spectrums +D/Emulex disk utility, a highway code quiz and a decidedly lacking selection of 128K music.

The July issue is equally as impressive with a Spectrums sound/light generator, a program called Big Tones that increases the Spectrums' number handling capabilities considerably, some clip art, a nifty routine that scrolls text across the top of the screen in the border, flags - a weaving pattern generator and finally, Real Race, a super fast, very difficult, budget standard racing game with excellent sound FX. That's as well as screenshots of letters, serious software and hardware reviews, news, tips and classifieds all devoted to the worship of

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#### EASY PEASY

I like questions I can answer, so thanks to Ian Gittings of Oxford for the following demand - "Where can I get a new power pack for my +2. The original one died suddenly and for no apparent reason recently."

Power supplies are easy to get hold of, whatever type of Specxy currently has a space on your desk and a place in your heart. For 48K power packs try Bentleys (251, Newcastle Street, Sarsden, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs) ST6 3QW which advertises them for £10, +2 packs can be bought for £18 (plus £7.50 P&P) from SCS Components, 218 Portland Road, Hove, Sussex BN3 9QT. The same place also has +3 supplies for the same price.

One place I've tried before is Omnidrive Supplies, 23 Cannon Street, Derby DE1 2LS. Send an SAE or phone them on 0332 291219 for power unit prices. Hope that's sorted out.

Remember to tell them whether you're +2 or original grey one or a sleek new +2X. It's the latter you'll probably be alright with a +3 pack.

#### INFINITE DIZZYS

We all know how popular Code Master's range of games featuring that lovable egg-type character, Dizzy, are so I thought it might be a good idea to offer hacks for as many of the series as possible. Here then are Multiface hacks for the original Dizzy and the latest addition to the saga, MagiLand Dizzy plus a routine for Dizzy 3 (simply type in the listing, save it from the beginning and start your tape from the beginning).

Unless you harbour a deep seated pathological hatred for the smug, ovoid git, you're bound to own one of the three, so get cheating and make Dizzy immortal. Thanks once again to our old pal, Alan Jones for the latter two hacks. 382X 26272.0 - 38700.0 - infinite lives 99844.1 - Turbo speed 54215.0 - Immortal

10 REM DIZZY 3  
20 REM BY ALAN JONES (FOZ)  
30 CLEAR 24329: FOR T=73296 TO 73305  
40 READ A: POKA IF A: NEXT T  
50 RANDOMIZE USR 23303  
60 DATA 175,50,25,246,195,0,97  
70 DATA 221,33,198,92,17,0,1  
80 DATA 62,255,55,205,86,5,48,241  
90 DATA 62,91,20,62,93,195,198,92  
100 DATA 599: REM END MAGIKER  
MAGIKER DIZZY - 25622.0 - infinite lives

Robin Alway

## CPC

- Loricels new game, *BuilderLand*, previewed
- Can you transfer programs to ROM?
- Should RBI2 have been a Specxy port?

#### BUILDERLAND

French software house Loricels was all over time considering pulling out of the CPC market in the UK, but now there are at least two new games heading our way across the channel.

One of these is *BuilderLand*. Now it's rather difficult to describe this game. It's a bit like the 16-bit smash *Lemmings*, where you have to help thousands of the little creatures reach safety in the face of a hostile

environment and their own innate stupidity.

In *BuilderLand* you're only trying to help one character - Menta - progress across the screen. It's a horizontal scroller and it moves with all the pace of an anabolic slug. In this case, though, it's a good thing, because that gives you more time to place blocks, ramps and other objects in his path to prevent him coming to a sticky end. It's tough, but it looks very good indeed.



• *BuilderLand* is a horizontal scroller with a difference. Not much fast action, but lots of puzzles.

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## DON'T DO AS I DO...

Here's a story with a moral. Once upon a time there was an editor who knew that the last thing he would tell people to do was fiddle with leads while they were connected to computers and peripherals. But this editor thought he knew better. He thought it wouldn't matter if he fiddled with the lead connecting his 486 to his Canon 1200. And what happened? Guess I blew the data thing up. The Canon, that is, not the 486. I lost such a lead.

## ROOM ON THE ROM?

Adam Walker of Nintendo has an interesting question about ROMs:

"I use Tascam CP/M and the Mac Office database frequently and I was wondering if it would be possible to transfer these programs on to ROM, so that they could be plugged into a ROM board for easy access? If this is possible, what is the biggest program a ROM could hold, and how much would a ROM board and the chips to transfer the programs cost?"

Well the bad news, Adam, is that it's impossible to transfer the programs you describe to ROM. Programs for use on ROM have to be specially written programs, since they use different areas of the machine's memory. You could be in luck with CP/M though, since Graduate Software has developed a way of transferring it to ROM. You need to send your CP/M master disk and a cheque for £24.95 (though Graduate Software is at 14 Formosa Road, Welton on Trent, Derby DE7 2HR. You



• R22's graphics are colourful enough, but they're blocky too.

can also get the word processing program Proton on ROM too, and that's available for £25 from Amex Ltd, 811 Lincoln Road, Pittsburgh PA1 3HA.

You can get 16K on a single ROM chip, but larger programs can be accommodated simply by switching between ROMs. ROM boxes cost around £25, but if you buy one from Amex at the same time as you're buying a Proton ROM it'll only cost you £20.

## YOURRR OUT!

R22 stands for Yuez Satted Jr, and it's the name of Opremi's new baseball simulator. I took a look at the program on a Speccy (yikes! a couple of weeks ago) and I rushed pretty good - I was never taking forward to the Amstrad version after that.

The good news is that it's not a Speccy pit. The bad news is that it

should have been! Unfortunately, the mode 2 graphics, although colourful, are blocky and confusing, so that a lot of the appeal of the game or the Speccy too is lost.

But what about the gameplay? Well before you can actually hit ball W ball, you have to cluster through some rather tedious options screens. Those out of the way, you get to pitch your first ball. Nothing to it - press F and then quickly move the stick according to what kind of spin you want to put on the ball. After that, it's up to the batter... the display changes if he hits the ball, and you see your batters charging around the field in pursuit of it.

If your pitches are good enough to get past the batter three times, he's out. Get three batters out and it's your turn to go in there and try and slog the ball out of the park.

This is the easy bit. Cloning the ball is simply a matter of timing your stroke. The ball doesn't travel too fast, so it's not difficult. That's the trouble with R22, it's all a bit one-sided. Bating is easy and pitching/fielding isn't. The graphics are colourful, but just too blocky, and the sound is nothing to write home about. Bit of a disappointment this one. Price a £10.95 cassette, £14.99 disk.

## CHEATING TIME!

Now Scott of Shadon has a cheat for the excellent budget game Scooby Doo and Scrappy Doo. You can get infinite lives by getting to the options screen and then pressing the keys P, L, O, N, C and S simultaneously. The border should flash to show you that it's worked.

Meanwhile, Graham Smith gives you a piece for Proton R22 which gives you strength, time and boys.

1 - Proton Start-Up Graham Smith  
2 - Infinite strength, time and 3 - Keys (tape)

4 -

30 DATA 2a,01,00,02,0a,00,01,01  
30 DATA 00,02,05,00,01,05,0a,00  
30 DATA 32,04,05,0a,00,02,01,06  
40 DATA 01,02,0a,01,00,0a,01,01  
50 DATA 01,02,01,01,01,0a,00,02  
60 DATA 0a,01,01,01  
70 DATA 01,01,02,00,00,01,01  
80 DATA 01,01,01,01,01,01,01  
90 DATA 01,01,01,01,01,01,01  
100 IF 01788 THEN CALL 90:END  
110 PRINT:Goto error

Rod Lawton

Rod Lawton is editor of Amstrad Action

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## C64

- Thalamus' stunning compilation
- Shoot some pool American-style
- Programming without borders

## GET YER HITS ON THE HITS

The original HITS compilation was released back in 1989, and is reported to be one of the best-selling compilations ever. Not surprising, as it contained Sansarc, Gilda, Quander, Hunter's Moon, Hawkeye and Amulet.

None of these games failed to gain a prestigious accolade, in fact nearly all were number one in the charts. How can publisher Thalamus follow that? Easily...

● Summer Camp is a flick-screen arcade game, reminiscent of New Zealand Story. You play Maxine Mouse, and your aim is to recover the sacred Stars and Stripes flag which has been stolen. Without it, the Summer Camp cannot open for the holiday season... ah dear. On each screen an ACME crate must be collected, as this is easier said than done. There are a multitude of evil creatures, such as mad bats, which vary from level to level. Maxine can collect a KONG - remember those who shot the 8 ball acts as a helpful platform and the helicopter flies her by.

There are four levels in all, but the game is by no means easy. At the end of

each level Maxine must assemble a vehicle in a panic-inducing puzzle screen. For example, on Level 3 a rocket must be built to fly her to the moon let you do!

Graphics are colourful, well drawn and detailed. Music is pretty decent if there are only two tunes and good FX are adequate. Great fun, for the kids.

● Hunt Seeker is perhaps the next of the later, but as an excuse is a poor release. The aim is to collect flames from across the forests of Tander. When enough heat has been amassed, it must be given to the life-saving Triflyths plants, which will appear to shield a star from acid rain.

The main character is a brilliantly animated dog, on the top of which sits a ball which can roll off to collect the flames. As soon as a level is completed, it must be locked again at nightfall. Infrared tactics must be employed here, but there is a flash gun handy.

Hunt Seeker is unusual, both in the gameplay and in concept, but is playable nonetheless. The graphics are wonderful, as is the soundtrack, and the

FX are very atmospheric. Nothing spectacular, but not to be sniffed at.

● Shoot is a puzzle game with a difference. The player controls a ship which moves over the vertically scrolling play area. When the ship is turned left or right the screen snaps through 90 degrees so that it is impossible to watch someone else play the game and keep track of where they are! The aim is to get to the end of the Star; rainier has it that it influences just how many progress points there.

There are 20 levels in all, with a number of puzzles to solve. There are

different coloured tiles which speed up your craft and are vital to puzzle solving. There are other obstacles too - some not so lovely. Thankfully you can shoot, jump, and shoot a solid line behind you, although on some levels this is prohibited by atmospheric conditions.

Shoot is a superb game with colourful, fast moving graphics and some wonderful Marla Walker vocals, but be prepared for some frustration.

● Retrograde is a fast shoot 'em-up from the AFEX games and revolves around seven levels levels. Your score alone is

Continued on next page >

## AND NOW FOR A BORDERLESS C64...

One of the more interesting advances in C64 programming techniques has been the **borderless** - or, rather, the **lack** of them. About 50 per cent of all recent games utilize the border in some way. Amstel, Creatives, and Wotol all have static points in the borders, effectively expanding the play area. Indeed, Creatives allows the player to leap about freely in the top border (all that *Neon* the *Neon*).

It's OK for professional programmers, but what about you and me? Surprisingly the borders can be taken out using a BASIC trick. What's more, when sprites are used (with BASIC) they too can be placed in the top or bottom borders! Simply type in the following listing, save for any subsequent use, run it and you get a borderless C64.

```
10 F=490310:READ A
20 IF A=255 THEN SYS 49152:STOP
30 P=96:FA=F+1:GOTO 40
40
80 DATA 129,169,34,146,20,168,192
85 DATA 141,21,23,163,249,141,18,208
90 DATA 141,14,129,169,141,25,259
95 DATA 141,26,208,169,23,141,17,208
100 DATA 68,36,169,141,25,268,258
110 DATA 32,208,173,17,234,14,247,141
120 DATA 17,234,173,36,398,258,251,173
130 DATA 17,234,14,127,6,6,14,17
140 DATA 208,169,32,208,16,49,134,225
```

The program puts a machine code program into memory at \$49152 and the SVI jumps to the routine. When you run, the border may be cluttered with garbage - a hefty POKE 16383 0 will clear this. The program is self-contained, so it can be incorporated into your own BASIC programs.



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4 threatened by seven evil tyrants and you must get rid of them. Each level comprises of a horizontally-scrolling section and there are a number of doorways which lead to vertically scrolling levels. Allies that on the planet surface leave RAM clutter behind, which can be used to buy into a weapons in the Shop. Floor Runners can also be pinned here and must be deposited at the bottom of each duct.

There is a huge array of extra weapons to buy, which can be clipped on to your suit. You also have a mighty powerful which can be upgraded as well. At the end of each level comes a massive mine cart, which must be destroyed within an allotted time.

Retroscape is one of the best games for the CD4 and ranks alongside Armalyte for sheer alien annihilation. Superb graphics with loads of variety and mindbending scenery to boot.

● **Creature** - last but not least, and not surprisingly the best selling CD4 game this year. Clyde Ratchford sets out to rescue his karkoon from a fate worse than... er... something really ghastly.

Our hero traverses the horizontally scrolling landscapes, tackling all manner of weird creatures. He has lots of weapons to use, and loses his large Name bracelet. Midway through each



● **Retroscape** - one of the games on Nintendo's latest compilation. Every game is original, aesthetically pleasing, and playable.

level, Clyde visits the friendly witch's hut to buy more weapons, and then it's on to the second part of the level. Each section has its own obligatory large number-one, but there is also a tribute chamber for each level where one of Clyde's charms is being mercilessly tormented by some nasty pieces of work - it's up to you to save them!

The thought that has gone into Creature is stunning, especially the battle chambers. The graphics are cute, extremely colourful and never fail to make a smile. Sound is a rather odd mix of burly FX and some lively music. Amazingly original and great fun - it's a pity the game is only six months old.

The Hit 2 is a compilation not to be missed. Out soon on cassette (£16.99) and disk (£19.99).

Andrew Roberts

## MACINTOSH

- Details leaked on Apple's new portable
- Bargain upgrade offer for WordPerfect users
- Aldus' new Freehand and Pagemaker combination

### RUMOURS...

● After a hearing which took place on 8 July, federal judge Vaughn Walker has declared that January 1992 will be the end of the "discovery" period in the Apple Computer vs Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard case. This means that the way is open after this date for a full jury trial, if the parties have not settled before then.

After three years, it looks like the case is nearing the end and the preliminaries - now Apple will have to prove to a jury that its claims against the other two companies (that the Microsoft Windows and Hewlett-Packard NewWave GUIs infringe on the copyright of the Mac interface) are valid.

Judge Walker could have dismissed the case at the hearing, so his decision that a jury trial is possible must be encouraging to Apple.

● According to several news service Newstytes, Apple has announced that its new manufacturing plant in Fountain, Colorado will be used to manufacture its new portable Macintosh. This is a breakthrough in Apple's corporate communications - until now, Apple has

not officially confirmed that a new portable is being developed. Indeed, the company has actually said that it hopes to introduce the new machine before the end of the year - informed rumours suggest an 21 October rollout.

On the same subject, an artist's impression of the new Macintosh Portable in American magazine MacWeek has led to much speculation that the machine was less of a speculative impression and more of an accurate diagram. "Slightly informed sources" reckon that the diagram - which shows a Mac with a trackball situated centrally below the keyboard, rather than to one side like the current Portable - is so accurate that Apple in the US is hoping, mad, trying to find out who leaked details.

It's unlikely that the source will be discovered, however, since prototypes of the new machine are thought to have been shipped to hundreds of developers over there. At the moment, it's thought that no-one on this side of the Atlantic has seen the new machine - and that includes staff at Apple's UK headquarters in Stockley Park.

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- Russian computer company Informaco has recently announced that it is to be the first Apple-authorized distributor of Macs in the USSR. Apple has confirmed that an agreement with a Soviet company in that area, but has not yet provided any more details.
- Apple has announced that it has made a net loss of £31 million in the third financial quarter of this year. This is because it spent some £81.7 million on "restructuring, cost reduction and other activities that are now underway." Shareholders of Macs increased by more than 50 per cent compared to the same period last year, and net income increased by 12 per cent. According to

John Sculley, Apple's chairman and chief executive officer, "during the quarter we took actions aimed at positioning Apple even more competitively for the future," and added that he is "committed to redesigning Apple's infrastructure and financial model so that they are both sustainable objectives within the dynamics of this changing industry."

#### PRODUCT NEWS

WordPerfect UK has announced a number of special offers to encourage people to buy its WordPerfect 2.0 word processor. Users of Microsoft Word need only pay £71. It's up to WordPerfect, while earlier users of

WordPerfect can upgrade to the new version 2.0 for only £51.

- **Altis UK** - creator of **Freehand** and **PageMaker** - has launched a package called **Altis Creative**, which is a combination of those two best-selling programs. The package costs around £995 and includes a voucher entitling purchasers to attend a one-day workshop to familiarise themselves with the programs.
- **Mac programmers** looking for having to wade through loads of Macintosh volumes 1 to V in order to find the exact syntax of some obscure ROM location command can now buy an online reference tool to simplify things.

Synaptic, creator of **Think C** and **Think Pascal**, has introduced a package called **Think Reference**, which includes the information from all five volumes of **Inside Mac**, including descriptions of Toolbox routines, programming tips and fragments of code. The program has cross-referencing facilities, and the data can be searched by name, keyword and structure, among other methods.

In the US, **Think Reference** will cost \$99 - to expect it to sell for roughly £100 over here. It requires at least 1Mb of RAM and around 3.5Mb of hard disk space. You can contact Synaptic over here on 0528 776341.

● Those of you with loads of money and a Mac SE/30 or its kin can now buy an accelerator board which is claimed to accelerate the Mac's speed beyond the Bill and even Sur's SPARCstation.

Fastest Data Systems claim that applications such as spreadsheets should run up to 300 per cent faster than the file, while graphics and GIS programs will run up to 165 per cent faster. The board, called the **Talbot**, is Systems Compatible, and should run with most Mac applications. It will cost \$2,995, plus \$50 for an OS2 accelerator card. Call Fusion in the States on 010 1 512 338 5326.

● **Heydon & Son** has reduced prices on all monitors from £400 to £100, full-page Doty Trimble colour monitor now costs £1,795 + VAT, with a standard 512 interface card for the Mac II family at £295 + VAT and a 24-pin accelerated card £1,125 + VAT. Heydon & Son is on 083 203 5173. Ian Hingley

## POSTCARD FROM AMERICA

Sometimes a glorious event occurs that reaffirms one's faith in the innate stupidity of software users and developers. This happened with the shareware program **MacSpillDrop**.

**MacSpillDrop** is an old COBOL that reprograms a standard Mac II video card to display a 704 x 512 pixel screen, instead of the normal 640 x 480. It only works with 4-bit and 8-bit Apple video cards. This fantastic hack is by **Harold Holt** of **Bell**.

The program starts the monitor out at the smaller screen and then gradually increases the resolution of the video signal until the monitor, that much as adaptable as Apple's will just give a blank screen to a MAU-produced signal.

There seemed to be plenty of interest in this hack. Who wouldn't want the additional screen real estate for a minimal price! But perhaps not enough registered users to satisfy the author. He warned in the last release [1.31] that "I haven't received a reasonable feedback by now, I won't release an updated version."

Suddenly last June, the product stopped working—everywhere.

Holt had included a time bomb to bring everything to a **MacSpillDrop**. This prevented a code checked information on the video board, which shut down the board, and then reinitiated a data board.

Moving the video board did make a difference. For each bit, the expiration date moved forward 17 days, 3 hours, 18 minutes, and 17 seconds (4/7.5 seconds). Since the author refused to come forward with an updated version, all kinds of patches and fixes appeared. Programs like **Recharger** changed the date before the MAU loaded, and then changed it back. This solution worked for some, but added yet another bit into over-packed systems.

Regular patches tried to prevent the **Apple** procedures from executing. They didn't stop MA2 from checking the video data, but redirected the result of the check. No matter what the result, the program loaded. Some idiot 4-6 programmers wrote custom video-screen applications that required **MacSpillDrop** to operate. I could wish in the max on reliance on hacks.

David Morganston

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# WHOLE WIRED WORLD

Cheaper phone charges for modem users courtesy of the EC; budget hard drives for the Amiga; dot matrix printer companies go into battle—all this and much more from Steve Gold, our intrepid reporter on the wire.



## EC PHONE PRICE CHECK

Calling all modem users with high phone bills—the European Commission has announced an investigation into whether EC telephone companies are overcharging for their international phone calls.

A preliminary examination, the agency says, has indicated that alleged high charges for calls both within the EC and to other countries could be the result of anti-competitive arrangements.

EC Competition Commissioner Leon Breiden says that the commission has found evidence that consumers are paying too much for calls outside the EC in proportion to the costs of the services. He says they also pay two or three times as much for a call to another EC country as for one covering an equivalent distance within their own country.

"The decision to proceed with a formal investigation shows the commission's determination to ensure that consumers and business users benefit from maximum price transparency and full compliance with the competition rules," he said.

So what's likely to result if the investigation? Reduced international call charges, that's what. Although this doesn't affect trunk calls directly, it's likely to put a lot of pressure on BT to reduce them as well, or at least hold prices steady for a while.

## US E-MAIL COMPANY LINK

At long last, it looks as though electronic mail services are getting their act together with direction. Three US E-mail companies in the US have agreed to link the user directory of their services

to a global E-mail service, available to subscribers of all their services.

The idea is the result of user frustration. Although most of the US E-mail services are inter-connected, if the subscriber does not know the address (mailbox) of the recipient on another system, the message can't be sent.



• Epson dot matrix printers are being rivaled by Fujitsu's recently released low-cost D3680 24-pin printer.

into a global E-mail service, available to subscribers of all their services.

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There are now plans for a pilot E-mail service—spanning AT&T Telemail, Delmon, other E-mail and on-line services—to be launched early next year. A date for the launch of a full E-mail E-mail service has not been announced.

## AUTOMATED BLEEPERS

Calling all Atari Portfolio users with an alpha numeric beeper—Telnetnow, a Phoenix-based company, has come up with a software/hardware combo for the Portfolio that links to your phone line. The system allows the online preparation of messages to be-line telecopying.

The battery-powered system fits neatly into the pocket and enables the user to "dial" an on-line beeper from most phones. This saves having to call the service operator. In the UK, most of

the major telecopying services, including BT, offer on-line entry of messages.

Contact: Telnetnow, 1500 South Priest, Suite 101, Tempe, AZ 85281, USA. Tel: 0101-83-600-899-7282.

## THE 'MOMI' CASE TURNS

Just when you thought the case of Robert Morris and his famous Internet worm program was closed, along comes the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) to re-open the whole affair.

Morris was convicted in January last year for his release in November 1988 of a computer worm, a self-replicating program, into computer networks that link university and military research facilities in the US. The worm infected and shut down an estimated 6,000 UNIX-based systems attached to the Internet, Argonne and Mitel networks.

Morris was sentenced to three years probation, a \$10,000 fine and 400 hours of community service. He also had to pay costs relating to his probation.

The sentence was immediately criticized, with many on the law enforcement side saying that Morris should have

the DL3680, a 24-pin printer that retails for just \$990.

The key feature of the DL3680 is the software that comes bundled with the unit—one of the applications is ZType, a PC-resident utility that enables the printer to be used as a typewriter, be controlled at the computer's keyboard and be programmed to create templates of commonly printed forms. Another package, DL Menu, enables the configuration of the printer to be changed from the PC, as bypassing the printer's control panel.

Fujitsu is making some bold claims for the DL3680. The Japanese giant claims that it's the fastest in its category at 360 cps. The nearest competitor is the Epson LQ1170 which has a top speed of 330cps.

received a prior sentence, while others felt that, since he had convinced them that the damage was caused by error rather than a malicious act, no penalty should have been imposed.

The EFF, meanwhile, is a not-for-profit organization in the US set up by a group of computer industry gurus to protect the rights of individuals involved in hacking cases. According to Tim Viles, a senior lawyer representing the EFF in the case, Morris' case is far from cut and dried as far as the courts are concerned.

"We will file a brief supporting Morris' contention that the 1996 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act under which Morris was charged is much too broad a statute," said Mr Viles.

## PC SECURITY SYSTEM UNVEILED

Most PC security systems rely upon a key or similar device to gain access to the machine. If you lose the key, you've had it. Now a small Canadian company, Trove Resources, has come up with a hardware/software system that analyzes the way you type in your password to be sure that it's really you at the keyboard.

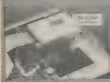
Trove's system is called Bioguard. The system "fingerprints" a user's typing. The company claims that each user's keyboard typing patterns are unique, so a keyboard "fingerprint" can be tagged and compared.

The S485 system consists of a full-length PC expansion card and a software support program. As each user logs on to a PC, the security system develops an electronic signature record of that user. The user's files are automatically updated to take account of changing keyboard dynamics.

Contact: Trove Resources, Suite 505, 850 Burnside Street, Vancouver, BC, V6C 2J1, Canada. Tel: 0101-604-884-4845 Fax: 0101-604-661-5219. ■

## BUDGET INTERNAL HD SYSTEM FOR THE AMIGA DEBUTS

ICD, a company renowned for its budget hard drives for the Amiga 500, has done the same for the Amiga 1200. This month we'll see the



• Compared with the 1200, the ICD 1200 is a budget hard drive for the Amiga 1200.

company's latest in the series of hard drives for the Amiga 500.

The ICD 1200 is a budget hard drive for the Amiga 1200. It's a direct replacement for the standard Amiga 500 floppy drive and can be compared with an internal budget and software to drive the system. Pricing is just set at \$499.95 for the 12MB drive and \$699.95 for the 10MB version.

Contact: ICD, 1220 Ross Street, Rockford, IL, 61101-1437, USA. Tel: 0101-410-999-8236 Fax: 0101-410-955-6382.





# CIRCUIT CITY

Building, fixing or expanding your system can give you a lot of satisfaction. Keith Pomfret answers some of your questions on the trickiest bit of all... soldering.

**W**ho gets more letters and questions about soldering and soldering than any other subject on the technical desk. Rather than answer each of them individually, we're explaining a little more about what solder is here, how it works and which types of solder to use. This should help you get the best results.

## LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

Without solder, there would be no way of building computers as we know them. Solder forms the 'glue' that joins components to circuit boards and makes the important electronic connections that allow electrons to flow freely around the circuit.

Solder is essentially an alloy of two metals, lead and tin. Its useful properties in an electric circuit are that electricity flows easily through it and has a low melting temperature and is therefore malleable.

If two components or a component and a termination on a circuit board are held together and solder is applied by melting it with a hot soldering iron, the solder will run across the components and when the soldering iron is moved away, will cool in a few seconds to provide a 'bridge' between the components that electricity can flow through.

When computers or any of the electronics are manufactured, a lot of the soldering is done by machine and even that which is done by hand as doing on specialised jigs using a purpose built solder gun.

When we want to solder, we have to rely on hand and eye, with a soldering iron held as steadily as possible and the solder fed gently on to the job.

## CAST IRON DECISIONS

The choice of soldering iron is up to the individual, but for doing delicate electronic work, an iron with a fine tip is obviously best. The thicker the tip, the more delicately you can work.

There are several kinds of soldering iron. The easiest, and most unsuitable, is the unpowered kind. This is a large awkward heavy iron that needs to be warmed in a fire or flame until it is cherry red. It can weigh a couple of pounds and although a plumber might use it for work on lead piping, it shouldn't be used on electronics.

Next is an electric iron. This plugs into the mains, and for some occasions into 12V car electricals and comes in many variations from a simple plug in, hot up and go model to a thermostatically controlled solder station. It takes a few minutes to warm up and in all of its



\* Solder blow - if it all goes wrong, this desoldering tool will limit the damage. It works like a bicycle pump to create and suck the solder from the heated joint.

forms it is suitable for electronic work. Another kind of electric iron is shaped like a gun and warms up in seconds. It is very convenient but its pistol shape can make it cumbersome for fine work.

Finally, there's a self-contained gas powered iron. This works on butane gas (also used to fill cigarette lighters) and is ideal in that it can be used anywhere without mains power. It takes a bit of getting used to but is the most flexible and versatile. It has interchangeable tips that can vary in width from 1mm to 4mm making it suitable for most jobs.

## SOLDERING ON

Solder comes in many forms from the weighty bar of industrial solder used by a plumber to a fine thread of wire, not much thicker than a hair that can be used for the finest work.

The large thick industrial strength solders are an alloy of tin and lead and as such are unsuitable for fine work. In its raw form, solder doesn't flow and take very well and needs a catalytic agent to help this. The catalyst used is a powder known as flux because of its properties with regard to helping things to flow.

A plumber might dip his bar of solder in a can of flux powder before applying it to his job. This may be fine for large jobs but work around a printed circuit board where the components are less than a millimetre apart wouldn't be possible with this.

Electronics and hobby shops sell a huge array of different grades and sizes of solder, most of which are suitable for delicate electronic work. The magic word when buying solder is 'eutectic'. This means that the solder has several cores of flux already built into it.



\* Gas powered soldering iron with temperature control. It requires butane lighter gas and will run for 60 minutes continuously on a full tank. Available from Tandy at £19.95.

Thus, when it is warmed up by the iron, the right amount of flux is already present in the molten solder and this causes it to flow properly.

To decide which thickness of solder you need, look at the sort of job you'll be doing most. If it's all very fine work then you'll need the thinnest, finest solder. This will be less wasteful and less messy than thicker solders but will need a more careful touch. Most regular solder users pick three grades. One small spool of the finest solder, a large spool of the next size up and a small spool of solder about 1.5mm thick for larger jobs and when working on mains equipment that has larger areas to cover.

## ON THE JOB

The combination of the right iron and the correct solder for the job will make electronics work easier and the results more professional looking. Nothing looks worse than a job that is finished off with mountains and blobs of solder and components blazed by being touched by a hot iron.

Make sure to pick a soldering iron that feels comfortable in your hands and always work on a clean heat-proof surface. ■

## TOOLS TO GIVE YOU A HELPING HAND

A well thought out soldering station allows you to do your soldering in the most comfortable and safe way possible. It's a good idea to have a few different types of soldering iron and a few different types of solder.

These are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job.

It's a good idea to have a few different types of soldering iron and a few different types of solder. They are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job.

work. It's a good idea to have a few different types of soldering iron and a few different types of solder. They are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job. They are the best tools for the job.

## TIN-TIN

To get the best results when soldering wire and tabs, it should be noted that this means warming the cable and up with the iron and allowing a thin coating of solder to cover the exposed ends. When it comes time to join the components together, the stored and makes this easier and ensures a better joint.



# TECH TIPS

Find out how to network IBM hard disks, where to get a bubble jet printer, how to buck up a slowcoach PC and how to choose the best educational computers... with Keith Pomfret

## Net result

In my organisation there is a real fear of spending money on IT but with a bit of luck my section may be given two IBM PS/2's (hopefully with 800 hard disks).

We would like to have access to those hard disks from either or both machines at the same time (for example: what we have created in the way of spreadsheets on one machine may need to be read and amended by the other user).

To such a fix-up feasible with bits of tape, blue tack and rubber bands etc?

Bob Jennings, Warwick

**WELL, INSTEAD** of using bits of tape and blue tack, you could try a local area network (LAN).

LANs enable computers to access each other's hard drives and would be the perfect solution to your problem. You could have only one machine with a hard drive and allow the other machines to access it. But, to be realistic, PCs really need a hard disk to be useful.

The cost of a LAN isn't too expensive, you'll be pleased to hear. The most common PC LAN is the Novell, and most dealers sell something along these lines.



If you've got a black cat and a maggy pig, you too could carry away a PS/2 in the manner prescribed by this IBM publicity shot.

## Printer ribbon

Could you please tell me where I can purchase a printer ribbon for a Juki 5100 Dotmatrix Printer. I've tried lots of companies but nobody seems to stock this type of printer ribbon anymore.

Many thanks for your help with this problem.

Simon Hodgkins, Coventry

**IN ITS TIME**, the Juki 5100 was one of the cheapest ways of getting Near Letter Quality (NLQ) output. It was very popular because of that, and I'm surprised to hear that you can't get a ribbon for it.

We don't have a phone number for Juki in the UK, but a possible alternative is to contact WAGO on 091-883 0000 and purchase some of their amazing ribbon re-winding spray. This CFC free spray will take you over through several re-windings while you turn the reel and run for the ribbon. If you can't find the ribbon at any computer dealer or supplier, try the regular computer shops and fairs. They are a veritable cornucopia of necessary widgets for people with aging computers and peripherals.

## Bubbling jets

I am considering buying a new printer, and have decided that a bubble-jet printer sounds like a good idea.

The Hewlett-Packard Deskjet

500 has been getting a lot of coverage lately, but I also want to find out about the Canon desktop bubble-jet.

To this end, I wish to write to the manufacturers asking for information. Could you please give me their addresses?

Colin Howard, Tyne and Wear

**BUBBLE-JET** printers are becoming a popular and inexpensive way of getting good quality output for not too much money. However, Hewlett-Packard's Deskjet 500 is an ink-jet printer which is different. Ink-jet printers spray the ink on to a page, whereas bubble-jet printers, such as Canon's BJ series work on a pulse heated capillary action.

Canon's low-end bubble-jet, the BJ100, is available around the £200 mark, and HP's Deskjet 500 is priced at about £250. Both offer 360 by 360 dpi resolution, though neither is as good as a laser printer.

To answer your question, Hewlett-Packard can be reached on 0344 404888. Canon on 091-773 3172.

## Games link

If I bought a Nintendo Game Boy for my son, would he be able to connect it to my PC monitor so he can watch the games in colour?

Ralph Moore, Hereford

**NO, THAT WOULDN'T** be possible. The Game Boy has no method of



There's no method of connecting from Nintendo's Game Boy to an external monitor and anyway it's black and white.

outputting to an external monitor and the display on the Game Boy is monochrome.

## Slow PC

I have an original slowcoach 8 Mhz IBM PC AT which is great except for one thing - speed. When I try to use DTP and graphics programs, it takes a digital Mogador and slips into crawl mode.

I'm happy with its power supply, my expansion cards for scanner, sound and other peripherals are happy and without problem. I'd like to upgrade to a fast processor without total system upheaval. I realise that I could put a faster 208 mhz in a matter of seconds but I wonder whether a 386 can be fitted without replacing the whole

## TIPS It's an outrage... the saga continues

**THERE SEEMS** to be no depth or height to which you will not slide or climb to arrive at us that you've got the most outrageous bit. Dan Wilson went to an auction and picked up a mainframe sized bargain for a calculator sized price. Here's what he had to say:

How about this for the bargain of the year? It was a tiny section room in the West End and while everyone was busy looking at Amstrad and Olivetti's I came across a large cardboard box with two monitors; two keyboards; two double drive computers; one large DECQWERTZ printer with sheet feed and cut paper feed; a jangle of cables and plugs and a switching box.

Nobody seemed to know the name DEC but they all knew Amstrad, so when the Amstrad came up it fetched a silly price,

slightly more than retail, but when we reached the DEC nobody made a bid. The auctioneer started at £1,000... £10, I realised what I hoped was a snail's pace. And it was mine!

But there was an even bigger shock when I went to collect it the next day. An even bigger plastic box hidden away on top of an old wardrobe with all the manuals, software, disks - word processing, maths, spreadsheet etc.

And to put the icing on the cake, when I got it home and plugged it in, everything worked perfectly, and the screens were amber and not that awful green. Get your heart off!

I enclose a copy of the catalogue page and the receipt, although you'll notice I've omitted the receipt to hide the name of the auction room. A minor I am... \$\$\$\$\$\$ I'm not.

Dan Wilson, Middlesex



## HEP Making the most of multimedia

I have money in hand or cash in pocket, depending upon which way you look at it, and want to get into multimedia. Should I go out at the end of the month and buy CDTV or CD-i?

Commander's CDTV looks interesting but from the

small amounts of technical data available so far, CD-i looks the best specified. I want multimedia for entertainment and reference, games, data and, most of all, to enjoy.

D. R. Forester, Redditch



• The first affordable multimedia machine available to the man in the street.

IF YOU WANT to get out next week and buy a home system, there's only one to go for and that's the CDTV (penned elsewhere in this issue). In terms of performance, specifications alone the CD-i probably wins by a short head. The problem with CD-i though is that it's not available and the best guess is 12 months before domestic CD-i machines appear.

CDTV is a true interactive multimedia machine based on computer technology and able to process data in the same way as well as use sound and graphics from CD data disks.

In short, if you want something that's available now, get the CDTV. In the worst possible scenario, if it doesn't catch on, you can buy a keyboard and disk drive and you've got a 1MB Amiga with floppy and optical storage.

motherboard? I don't mind having to pay for the board but I can't bear the thought of purchasing a perfectly good machine when upgrade may be possible.

Mark Drough, Coventry

IT IS PERFECTLY possible to do what you want without damaging your machine. The solution is a small board that fits into the socket vacated by your 286. You remove the 286, slot in the processor board and in two shakes of a processor's tail, you've a 386SX machine. This is only possible with the 586SX and not the DX. This is because the SX shares the same 16-bit architecture as the 286, while the DX is a full 32-bit processor. The AT's 16-bit architecture wouldn't support the DX chip.

With a 386SX running at up to 25MHz, you would see an immediate improvement in your DTP and also gain the other benefits of the 386 processor: those include virtually. This means that a 386 can emulate several 68086 processors in a PCXTX and thus allow true multi-tasking.

If you need to try your skill at winning a dart that this, you should turn to the inside back page where this week's D300 plus compo lets you win the SOTA Express/386 board! If you don't win, you can get the Express/386 from CTS on 0205 509944.

## Letter bug

Is there a simple way to get a letter from a word processor on a PC to go on an ST? The PC is an Amstrad PPC640 and the ST is a S1065FM. The problem is that the letter is a very long one that I want

to use as a newsletter I produce as the ST. I know that I could print it out from the PC and physically stick them into the design after scanning them on the photocopier but that wouldn't be cricket.

Malcolm Davlin, Belfast

THE PPC640 has 720k 3.5-inch drives and produces a disk that can be read by the ST. This means that it's simply a case of saving the text on your PC as an ASCII file that can be loaded directly into the DTP program on your ST.

An ASCII file is one which contains codes for letters, numbers, spaces and carriage returns and nothing else. This means that it's a global file format recognised by most word processing and DTP packages.

school.

I have decided to make up my own mind and up until a week ago I was undecided, I had to be Amigas or Macintoshes and I wasn't sure which.

A discussion with

Commander left me decided that while the Amiga is a fine machine, the price drop of the Macs made it the machine for my school.

What I need to know and no-one seems to be able to answer is: Does Apple have a true commitment to education or is it happy to dominate the DTP market and leave education to the others?

Name and address withheld for sake of job prospects

## School's Out

My school where I teach IT has taken up for the summer and it's my anniversary job to bin all of the aging BBCs and Minisuses and replace them with something a little more up-to-date.

I am between a rock and a hard place with regard to choice. The governors are wassonging me to buy PCs with the promise of free (and inappropriate) software taken from various machines they own.

The headmaster leads the 'learn or nothing' camp, mulling over ideas about literacy and dealing with people that we know and trust. Both groups are adamant that I know best and absolutely insist that I make a decision based on my own judgement as the needs of the

APPLE IN THE SHAPE of its UK boss Mike Newton confirmed that Apple does have a firm commitment to education in the UK. He cited several examples in which the company has been actively involved in the educational market, including Apple UK recently receiving an order from a group of Scottish schools for 350 machines worth £500,000.

The Macintosh has long been perceived as an educational computer as its home market in the US. Apple UK is making inroads into the UK market by showing education authorities that the Mac, with its intuitive interface, is the ideal learning tool for students from primary to postgraduate levels. Altogether there are around 100,000 Macs in the UK educational market.

Write to: Keith Pye, Apple UK, Apple House, Church Lane, Churchfields, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4NR.

## ABC guide to modern technology - part II

In Circuit City, issue 141, we started to explore what all those initials in the computer world stood for. This week, it's the second half of the alphabet.

**NTSC** National Television Standard Committee or, the television system used in the United States. Much less clear than the PAL system we use in the UK. It uses fewer lines, which explains why American software doesn't fit up all of the PAL screens. The NTSC format is known for losing the hue of a picture and consequently, the NTSC system is sometimes nicknamed *Never Twice the Same Colour*.

**NIU** Network User Identity. A user's identity on a communications network, often a password.

**OCR** Optical Character Recognition. An electronic way of scanning and recognising characters from a printed page.

**PCB** Phase Alternation Line. A colour TV system, as used in the UK. **PCB** Printed Circuit Board. The board on which all your computer's electronic components have been soldered and connected.

**PDEL** Picture Elements. The 'dots' that make up your TV and monitor display screen.

**PIR** Personal Identification Number. The code by which you, or something like your credit or 'money' card is identified and used.

**PSS** Packet Switch System.

**RAM** Random Access Memory. The memory in your computer is RAM, able to be accessed and erased by the user and computer programs.

**ROM** Read Only Memory. Unlike RAM, ROM can only be read from, not to. This prevents the contents of ROM from changing. This is why operating systems are stored in this way.

**RS232** Standard serial interface, used to control devices such as modems.

**RS423** Same as RS232 (above).

**SECAM** Systeme Electronique Couleur a Memorie. The colour TV system used in France and elsewhere.

**TL** Translator-Receiver-Logic.

**UHF** Ultra High Frequency.

**ULA** Uncommitted Logic Array. A group of chips which is not committed to any particular part of a computer system.

**UNIX** An operating system. Popular in multi-user systems. Developed by AT&T in the US but adopted by many other computer companies. Now something of a standard, UNIX can run on the largest mainframes, right down to microcomputers.

**VHF** Very High Frequency. **WIMP** Windows, Icons, Mouse, Pointer. A graphical user interface uses Windows, Icons, Mouse and Pointer to control and run programs.

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## ACTING UP FOR WINDOWS

Actar 3.1 is the latest release of an object-oriented development system for Windows 3 where the code generated with Actar can be linked to Dynamic Link Libraries of functions written in languages like C and Pascal. The system let you access up to 16Mb of memory and the memory swapping system uses a hard disk as virtual memory that will



\* The *Index* library includes code for all the subroutines and macros.

you run applications that are up to 2MB in size on a PC with 640K of RAM. The built-in classes in the Actor library include windows, dialogue boxes, graphics and functions for printing and managing data. More information from Niles at 0620 888334.

## RUSSIANS GO WITH THE FLOW

Not many people design their programs with flow charts these days, but they are very useful for understanding how a program actually works, especially if you didn't write it yourself!

**R-Tech** (Russian Technology of Programming) is a visual programming tool for C, C++ and Pascal on the PC. If you feed in existing source codes, it produces annotated flow diagrams to show

you what's going on. Alternatively, you can write your program as a flow chart with code attached and H-Tech will generate your source code from the chart.

You also get a graphic debugger with break-pointing and animation facilities that puts you back to the flow chart when anything goes wrong, highlighting the code where it thinks the problem is. R-Tech works with Borland Turbo C++, Turbo C and Turbo Pascal compilers.

Contact Tony Viba & Associates  
89.811119

## FUNKEY AND FREE

Compiled database programming languages give you faster code and Hantusch's Clipper compiler is very popular. Life is now a little easier for Clipper programmers because Function 1.52, the developer's library for the Clipper compiler now works with version 5.01 as well as the Summer '87 release. If you're a registered user, you can get a free upgrade from DBS to DBS-50M 4842. If you haven't bid the library yet, you can get a free demo disk from Hantusch.

## FROM C64 TO C128 AND BACK AGAIN

I'm using the Commodore 128 but I want my programs to run on the C64 if necessary. After I go into C64 mode to check the programs, I can't get back to 128 mode. Can you tell me how to do this and could I write a program to do it automatically?

Unfortunately not. When the T2S switches to 684 mode, the T2S Memory Manager (if MMIO) removes itself from memory - it certainly lives at 0000-0000 and 0000-0000. Once the MMIO is gone, you can't get back to 684 mode without a hard reset.

However, if you have an LI Kernel hardware plugged into the G2's expansion port, you can reset the mode like this because it can bypass the way the machine would normally work and reset the system to force it back to C128 mode. The command you need is `00 12` and you could include that in a program. You need to write into C64 mode, tell up the program, you want, maybe write the results or output into a file to check over at your leisure and then go back into C128 mode. That sort of program is normally called a script.

## THE CHEAPEST UNIX YET?

The Mark Williams Company is the US producer of a clone of the UNIX operating system for the PC that sells for \$99. Cohesent 3.2 costs £39 in the UK from AET on 021-765 8333. For that, the latest version of the UNIX clone includes a full version of C, including utilities and an extensive library and *agrep*, a pattern search program for C source code.

There are two "shells" that act as host ones, a Korn shell clone and an improved Bourne shell. You also get the powerful *rcp* file processor that supports Protocol and LaserJet fonts. ■

## GETTING UP TO SPEED WITH QBASIC

QBASIC comes free with MS-DOS 5, replacing the now venerable GW-BASIC (it stands for Gee Whizz, in case you've always wondered). However much you know about programming, one of these books should be what you're looking for to get the most from the language.

MS-DOS 6.02e • Keri Jansa • Microsoft Press  
• 1-5515-351-4 • \$5.95

This is a quick reference guide that contains every statement and function in the language in alphabetical order. If you want to look up the parameters for changing the screen colours or the list of error codes generated by DOS commands, this book will give you just the information you want, with example code in most cases.

If you can't remember exactly which function you need, you can look up a similar or related compound and the function you're looking for will probably be listed and cross-referenced. If you have an idea of what you need to know and you want it quickly, this is the book you want.

MS-DOS QBasic Programmer's Reference • Robert  
Anson, Christy Gannell and Harry Henderson •  
Microsoft Press • 1-658515-347-3 • £22.95

This is the first official guide to BASIC and it's an impressive and weighty tome. The functions of the language have been grouped logically rather than alphabetically, so that all the printer control commands are in one place, next to the keyboard and joystick commands.

Each chapter starts with a tutorial that's full of examples and explanations, followed by a reference section containing the relevant commands, again with examples and a lot of useful code; the chapter on graphics has programs for drawing different bar charts. You wouldn't need to know a great deal about programming to use this book and it covers just about everything you need to know about OBASIC to do some serious programming.



Running MS-DOS 3.54/3.5C • Michael Halvorsen & David  
Rumsey • Microsoft Press • 1-55875-343-6 • \$19.95

This book is ideal for someone who's never done any programming before. Clear and simple explanations and useful examples are followed by questions and programming exercises. All the answers and programs are in the back of the book, so you won't get frustrated wondering what an answer really was.

The last tutorial in the book covers debugging your programs, going through a sample program step by step and pointing out the mistakes that it's so easy to make. This is an easy to follow introduction to programming that covers the language thoroughly.



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## AMIGA FAVOURITES

Amiga games are a bit thick on the ground this week and so here's a rundown of the best of the bunch.

**Pacton** 87 is, believe it or not, an Amiga version of the ancient Nimmo all time classic. Pacton. It features the antics of a voracious yellow beach ball who's only ambition in life is to eat coloured dots.

This particular incarnation of Pacton tries hard to improve on the theme by adding lots of different mazes and bonuses. The game comes courtesy of Byteball PD and is in fact, a very enjoyable romp. It takes the main idea and turns it around a little, giving the player a fair bit of variety.

The ghosts you have to avoid are fairly clever and as a result, the game is rather difficult. The graphics aren't up to much, but they're more than adequate for this kind of game. Sound is decent, with waiting and out-of-sound effects.

## THE PD COLUMN

This week Frank O'Connor tries out the best Amiga games in the Public Domain; reviews some games for arcade-philles and delves into the 8-bit emulator market

You can't really go wrong with the basic idea of Pacton and so it comes off as being a polished and playable little game and easily one of the better Pacton clones on the PD scene.

## ARCADIAN PLEASURES

Arcade burls might prefer to get hold of a disk from Start. This disk contains some truly brilliant little games for the Amiga, including a neat Missile Command clone, a spiffy Q\*bert clone and a radically superior Galaxian clone.

Starting with the Galaxian game simply because it has the most initial name. It's called Girl Actions (got the pun?) and takes the theme of swooping, thingy spaces, enters to new heights. Well, actually it doesn't; it simply copies the original games exactly. No bad thing, Galaxian is a bit of a laugh and one of the best shoot-'em-ups of all time.

Another superior shoot-'em-up is Missile Command. This game, when released in the arcades, introduced the



• **Missile Command** - a superior shoot-'em-up which introduced the track-ball, and a faithful recreation of the original arcade game.

novelty of the track-ball. The object of the game is to blast incoming missiles out of the sky. You follow the trails the missiles leave using the cursor. Firing causes a sluggish explosion, which will hopefully take out the missile you were aiming for.

The point of this is to defend these dots at the bottom of the screen. If all three are struck by incoming enemy fire, then the game is lost. It's a fairly faithful copy and one fans of the original machine should seek out immediately.

Also on the disk is a neat Q\*bert. Q\*bert is a theme currently recurring in Ocean's conversion of Tait's Vector. The PD version is called Bally 2. Good name for a game which is actually identical to Bally 1.

Q\*bert, that isn't a problem. Bally 2 is absolutely superb. It takes a brilliant idea, uses it well and hey presto a masterpiece game worthy of anyone's attention. The idea is to fill a screen with colour, to do so, you have to box in areas with the trail your craft leaves behind. When you make a box, it fills with colour and you can move on to another area.

Trying to prevent your heroic antics are an assortment of middle-aged baddies. Don't worry about them too much, as frankly they're a bit fat. You have to reach different target percentages, depending on what screen you happen to be on. 80 per cent is about the average target required and it isn't as easy to get as it sounds.



• **Pacton 87** - an Amiga version of the ancient Nimmo classic.

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Note that V3.11 of the public domain four channel med is also included in this excellent program and you can switch from 8 to 4 channels at will.

(£15.00 for non-European). The price includes return post and packing. Payment in pounds sterling only. If ordering from overseas, send a bankers order/air cheque etc. (Credit card orders will not be accepted).

**Into coding?** - Want to learn? The Amiga Coders Club is for you! ACC 1-4 is the first four compressed issues of an excellent series for coders, even if you are new to the Amiga. If you want to learn Assembly, using DevPac, for our own new ACC special assembler disk, this is the club for you! ACC 1-4 (compressed) £15.00. The Amiga Coders Club disks are packed with source, hints, tips, advice from many of the well known coders that are on the Amiga news today. Issue numbers 5-14 are now available. Please note, (excluding the compressed immediately available ACC 1-4), and on 12, the price for each issue of the ACC disks is only £3.00. ACC 12 is our birthday issue. It is a 2 disk set, and therefore the price is £6.00. Amiga Coders Club Special! Here is a low priced member package for all you coders out there in Amigaland. (See the review in this month's Amiga Forum) £5.00.

## OUT ON THE PISTE

Amiganuts has released a lovely little game called *Downhill Skier*. It's very reminiscent of the ancient Spectrum game, *Horace Goes Sking*. This is no bad thing, the graphics have been tarted up and the sound has been given a shot in the arm too.

The aim of the game is to traverse a massive ski slope, avoiding trees and leaping obstacles. Flags appear at various intervals and can be collected for bonus points. The action is intense and the pace of the game is exhilarating.

It can be addictive but it is so much fun, you probably won't notice. It looks like the Amiga PC games scene is finally going places and will soon be giving budget games a run for their money.

## 8-BIT EMULATION

ST owners who miss the halcyon days of the Atari XL series should fret no longer. If there's any computer you fancy emulating on your ST, then you can with a little hunting around, get hold of an emulation package covering almost any eight-bit machine you care to mention.

The XL emulator is particularly good. Entirely software based, you can boot it up and run it almost immediately. The program emulates the 8-bit 6800 processor and includes the ancient and almost unusable Atari BASIC.

This program is extraordinarily professional, with an options screen that



allows you to select several different XL configurations. You can choose from the 32K, 64K and 128K machines, including the updated XE system.

The machines were quite sophisticated for their time, with a then incredible 256 colour palette and rather groovy sound chip. Unfortunately, the high price point and poor marketing meant that they never really took off.

You can boot up your preferred system and proceed to enter old Atari listings or make up your own. If you want to run XL software, then the included converter program could be the answer to your prayers.

The converter turns 8-bit code into a form that the ST (with the emulator installed) can understand. The difficulties of loading this software are considerably reduced by the inclusion of a word RAM

disk option. Once you have the necessary cables and drives set up, you can transfer the programs you need to use in one sitting. The computer then allocates RAM space as a kind of bank drive. In this way, the emulator is hooked up to an XL floppy drive and reads the RAM just like a disk.

The ST user will appreciate the difference in speed between the two systems. The XL, half a notoriously slow drive, with bigger files taking as long as ten minutes to load from disk!

Similar emulators are available, covering the BBC Micro, the Apple II, the Commodore 64 and most importantly, the ZX81. The 54 emulator is probably the worst of the lot. The main problem is it's very slow. The ancient BASIC and lack of features make using it an abso-

\* Downhill Skier is reminiscent of the ancient Spectrum game, Horace Goes Sking with tarted up graphics and sound. Devotee active makes for an exhilarating game from the growing Amiga PC scene.

## BUT WHERE DO I GET ALL THIS STUFF?

Goodman PCL,  
10 Cornhill Close, Mole Hay Estate,  
Langston, Stoke-On-Trent,  
Staffs, ST5 1SW  
Tel: 0782 335650

Start  
20 Holmeside, Sunderland, SR1 1JE

Bylbeck  
6 Mumby Close, Newark,  
Notts, NG24 1JE  
Tel: 9636 79087

Amiganuts  
189 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook,  
Southampton, SO1 6QZ,  
Tel: 0703 765880

lute nightmare. It also seems unlikely that there is any practical way of loading 64 software into the emulator anyway.

The Beeb emulator features superb BASIC and is easy to use, but the ZX81 emulator is the one you have to have. A keyboard map is supplied in the software and just as well, finding commands takes a multi-circuitous odyssey all day, never mind six mess mortals. All of these packages can be picked up from Goodman PCL in Staffordshire. ■



## AMIGANUTS UNITED

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(Received a good review).....£2.00  
1105: Reincarnation of Sgt. Pepper. A two disk music/pic extravaganza 1Mb.....£3.00  
1111: PCQ Pascal Front End (Assembler). This is a must for PCQ fans.....£2.00  
1112: NORTH C Front End Assembler by Steve Hawlin.  
(Additions by Mark Meany).....£2.00  
1119: AIR WAR. A shoot em up with a difference. Are you a good pilot?.....£2.00  
1116: BATTLE PONG. A new variety of Pong. (Received a good review last week).....£2.00  
1129: DOWNHILL SKIER. Remember good old Horace?  
(See Frank's review above).....£2.00  
1137: VIRTUAL WORLDS. A 1Mb anim-demo from the well known Thomas Landspurg.....£2.00  
1141: AMI-CHEQUE. Very good bank accounts program.  
(Note! Version 2 chip only).....£2.00

Many new programs have arrived, but there is no space to list them all!

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Also available is the brand new 1991 update number four. Send for it now! £1.00 (Update four contains only this year's additions to the list).

Please note that we are closed from 20th to 25th August and no orders will be dealt with during these dates.

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# EVENT HORIZON

Who's doing what, with what, with whom, how, why and where...

## THE PLACES TO BE...

**Making the Difference Until Tue 8 Oct**  
At the Science Museum, London. Info: 071-430 0000

**GeoCon '91 Sun 11 - Tue 13 August**  
Info: 010 32 03 234 3180

**Human Gene Mapping International Workshop Mon 19 - Thu 22 August**  
At the New Connaught Rooms, London. Info: 071-999 3816

**Computer Animation Competition and Exhibition Wed 21 - Wed 26 August**  
At the Araga Centre Scotland. Info: 031 557 4262

**PLASA Light & Sound Show Sun 8 - Wed 11 Sept**  
At Olympia 2, London. Info: 071-370 8174

**Leeds Computer Extravaganza Fri 13 - Sun 16 Sept**

**At the New Exhibition Centre, Leeds University. Info: 0532 677 657**

**CRM & MSDOS User's Group Sat 14 Sept**  
The first annual sale of second-hand computers, peripherals and software, held at the Spring Lodge Community Centre in Wilton. Stands are available at £10 for private individuals, or £20 for companies. Info: 0375 517495

**Business Computing '91 Tue 17 - Fri 20 Sept**  
At the Exco Court Exhibition Centre, London. Info: 071-490 9351

**International Police Exhibition and Conference '91 Tue 17 - Thu 19 Sept**  
At London's Barbican Exhibition Centre. Info: 081-595 7700

**The Works III Charles Babbage Thu 18 - Fri 19 Sept**  
Lecture III the King Edward VI College, Tolson at 14.15. Info: 0800 893821

**Effective Management III Information Technology Security Conference**

**Wed 7 - Tue 8 Oct**  
Forte Crest Regents Park Hotel, London. Info: 071-587 1117

**Computers Count: Tue 8 - Thu 10 Oct**  
An exhibition at Tolson Civic Hall. Info: 0800 803821

**Business Communications Awards Thu 10 October**  
At the Savoy Hotel. Info: 0800 800 947

**Charles Babbage's Impact on Modern Computing Wed 23 Oct**  
At the Science Museum, London. At 17.30. Info: 071-6389106

**Image Processing '91 Tue 25 - Thu 27 Oct**  
At Birmingham NEC. Info: 061-693 4469

**System Builder Wed 28 - Thu 31 Oct**  
At Sandown Exhibition Centre, Esher, Surrey. Info: 0622 614671

**Computer Graphics '91 Tue 5 - Thu 7 Nov**  
At the Alexandra Palace, London. Info: 081-868 9333

**Desktop Card III Tue 5 - Thu 7 Nov**  
As above.

**Open Systems III Wed 5 - Fri 8 Nov**  
At the Olympia, London. Info: 0764 472200

## Golden Moments

**A** look back into the history of computing with Express. If it happened we reported it first.

### ONE YEAR AGO

Something known as Eye-Gard was released for the PC. Not for users paranoid about cathode rays, but rather for those jittery about others using their computer, the device could detect the presence of anyone entering the room. Once it had done so, an unrelated system on the PC screen opened and actively followed the monitor's movements. Pictures could also be added, just to show them you really meant business.

With the introduction of the 386 and 386SX chips in 1989, the price of 285-based PCs dropped dramatically, reaching the sub-£1,000 this time last year. Nowadays, instead of the new 486 machines, you can pick up a 386SX machine for about £3,000.

### TWO YEARS AGO

Following the new Copyright law and doubts about the legality of software copying devices, it was alleged that one of Power Computing's programs had been ripped off and was being sold by Elexware Micros. The program in question was Blitz, a copying program.

Bad news for Apple, with a San Francisco judge refusing to accept that Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard had ripped off Apple's WWAP disk and feel. The case continues to this day...

Nintendo, that lovely (hugely complex) had them all worried. It was rumoured that the firm was intent on buying up the rights to all the big arcade games, with the intention of releasing them on its own consoles and preventing their release on computer formats, supposedly to persuade people to buy Nintendo consoles.

With arcade game producers Tengen and Sega opposed to Nintendo's plans, the computer games market has yet to dry up, although the recent rise in the popularity of consoles has hardly been good for the health of the home computer industry.

## The Insider...

Your weekly, centisp guide to the computer industry, compiled by our correspondents for you to the boardrooms and boardroom.

The Insider is mailed this week. Since this column began various Finance Industry Figures have seemingly grouped together to form a support group to protect their fragile eyes against too red and open press speculation. De-facto this is FEAD (Finance Industry Figures Against Deceit) with members taking on the rather massive titles of FIFs. This cannot be allowed to continue. If we had any constitutional rights (but the Insider is sure that each one of us has) we would have the right to sue. By the way, if you have any red researched information relating to FIFs you should send it to the Insider, The Event Horizon, New Computer Express, 38 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. Anonymity is secured, as is a five for anything used.

### NOT SO BORN SOIR

Paris is lovely in July. There's romance in the air and the chance to rebuild

relationships which might well have been reaching breaking point. That's the theory anyway. Unhappily for certain managing directors of certain computer dealers (presumably called box offices in the trade) theory and practice don't always mesh as a harmonious whole. Especially when the second half of the fraught relationship - the wife - is not in Paris at all. Now remember business people, attention to detail is all. If you say that you are going to Paris alone, make sure that the switchboard knows it is not to tell callers that your secretary is with you!

### A PYRRHIC VICTORY

It comes to something when an Express hack has to sit and listen to another of his colleagues being abused over the phone by a certain number of drivers who objected to a Shoot from the Hip column in Express' opening pages. Threatening

to put advertising in all well and good, and Microsoft has every right to do so. However, this strong one tactic does have a nasty tendency to boomering and forcing smash the bugaboo in the face when the magazine in question (a sister magazine of Express) refuses to take the advertising in the first place.

### YOU SHAN'T GO TO THE BALL

Is there any truth in the rumours that the recent split between Atari and co-managing manager Peter Stodden might have had something to do with the forthcoming Computer Entertainment Show? If Stodden apparently felt that attendance would be a good idea, The Atari powers that be thought otherwise. Well, it's a pity to know that the resignations had absolutely nothing to do with a personality clash between Stodden and Atari's Mr Gladwin.



Due to further expansion of our Sheffield offices, a number of vacancies have now arisen.

## PRODUCER

If you have the ability to manage a game from conception through to completion, then this vacancy could suit you. Ideally you will have an understanding of programming, a sound knowledge of game structure and the ability to communicate with individuals and teams of programmers. Salary and benefits will be commensurate to experience. A current full driving licence is essential. Help will be given should the successful applicant need to re-locate.

## PROGRAMMERS / ARTISTS

We require creative programmers and artists to work on 6502, Z80, 68000 and 8086 platforms. The variety of work ranges from Gameboy through to CD based projects. A proven track record is helpful but not essential as all applicants will be judged on ability. Salary and benefits will be commensurate to experience. Help will be given should the successful applicants need to relocate.

## FREELANCE

In addition to our internal programming teams we are always looking to take on any freelance projects from external teams who have a proven track record. Demos and storyboards are always assessed.

All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence. Contact James North-Hearn or Sean Kelly on 0742 753423 or write to Gremlin Graphics, Carver House, 2-4 Carver Street, Sheffield, S1 4FS.

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# PC SURVIVAL KIT

**PRODUCT:** PC Crash Course and Survival Guide and PC Crash Course II  
**COMPATIBILITY:** IBM PC, XT, AT and PS/2 computers  
**FROM:** PC Productions Ltd  
**CONTACT:** 0453 755200

**L**et's face facts. Most computer literate people would find a telephone directory more interesting reading than the majority of PC manuals. But as more and more people find they are being forced to come into contact with the divided modern technology at work, it's very refreshing to discover a pair of books that make learning about how to use a PC not just easy, but almost... well, fun!

The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide and PC Crash Course II by Peter Harrison are the perfect introduction to the PC for the complete beginner. They also make useful reading for people who have been using PCs for some time, as they cover an incredibly wide range of topics - everything from what the components of the system are called and how to stick in a disk, to quite complex stuff such as pressing batch files - in an extremely clear, concise and, above all, interesting way.

## ZEN AND THE ART OF PC MAINTENANCE

One of the main pleasures of the books is the way in which they casually demystify some apparently scary daunting concepts. Typical of this is a chapter in The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide entitled, 'How to sound like a techie even if you aren't one' which often, lessably explains about bits and bytes, the set up program, formatting and how a computer stores information, before encouraging you to get out your screwdriver and take a peek inside the system unit.

Peter Harrison is also keen to let beginners into the secret that many computer boxes actually do not know much more about PCs than the average newscaster. He demonstrates that all the long words and computer terminology are just a seemingly incomprehensible one complex-looking, but very thin crust covering to some quite straightforward operations and functions.

If the thought of DOS prompts and 386 processors give you a headache, then *PC Crash Course* could be the remedy. Dave Golder investigates a possible cure for PC-phobics

## INITIATION FOR THE NOVICE

The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide is for the complete novice and aims to teach 'the least you must know to buy and use IBM PC, XT, AT and PS/2 computers, plus III compatibles'. To a large extent it achieves this, though it is vague on some rather major points, such as using a mouse (which is actually covered in PC Crash Course II) and buying and running software. The first time it actually tells you how to get a program up and running is in the appendix, which is rather odd, as that is what most newcomers will be most interested in doing (so they can play a little, sink, or something else a bit more exciting than running a file).

One of the main pleasures of the books is the way in which they casually demystify some apparently quite daunting concepts

However, as an introductory guide to finding your way around DOS, The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide is faultless, and the simple exercises at the end of each chapter are essential for putting the knowledge learnt to practical use. The guide also comes with a free disk which demonstrates some PC programs, but falls far short of the quality of the book (see panel below).

PC Crash Course II takes up where the first left off, explaining further, more complex DOS functions, dealing with common problems such as memory expansion, keyboard malfunctions and viruses and going into more depth about peripherals and applications.

Aside from some appalling cartoons, its main failing is that it skimps a lot of ground already covered in the first book without adding much more of interest.



Learning about PCs does not have to be a dull experience as the PC Crash Course books prove.

However, this chapter entitled 'Batch Files' is nothing short of superb; by the end you could almost believe you were programming. When a short while ago you didn't a clue where to plug your mouse in.

## NEVER JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Both books are very well designed and laid out, though it is a shame they never quite live up to the promise of their excellent covers. They make good use of spot colour to highlight commands and screen displays, which makes the screens especially easy to follow. The diagrams are clear, but a few photographic illustrations would have been useful, especially of chips and motherboards, which do not come across well as line drawings. PC Crash Course II is a check full of really useful at-a-glance tables of everything from clock speeds to the ASCII character set.

The PC Crash Courses are highly recommended for anyone faced with a PC for the first time. Whether used as a way of getting over technophobia, or as a first step into more serious computing, they are ideal. ■

## ARE THEY WORTH READING?

### FOR

- ▲ Very clearly and simply written but packed with information without being patronising
- ▲ Handy summaries at the end of chapters and glossaries of terms
- ▲ Good use of spot colour to make command lines and things which you would see on screen show up very clearly
- ▲ Useful exercises which help develop the themes of each chapter

### AGAINST

- ▼ The disk supplied with The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide is very poor
- ▼ Both books would benefit from more photographs
- ▼ PC Crash Course II repeats too much of the ground covered in the first book

### COST

The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide £17.95  
 PC Crash Course II £15.95

## WHAT'S ALL DISK, THEN?

IBM PC, XT, AT and PS/2 computers, and III compatibles, will run the PC Crash Course and Survival Guide. The PC Crash Course II will run on IBM PC, XT, AT and PS/2 computers, and III compatibles, and on 386, 486, and Pentium processors. The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide will run on IBM PC, XT, AT and PS/2 computers, and III compatibles, and on 386, 486, and Pentium processors.

The program includes an information guide, a help file, a test program, a disk, a manual, and a book. The program is designed to be used on a computer, and it will run on a computer. The program is designed to be used on a computer, and it will run on a computer.

The program is designed to be used on a computer, and it will run on a computer. The program is designed to be used on a computer, and it will run on a computer. The program is designed to be used on a computer, and it will run on a computer.

The PC Crash Course and Survival Guide is a book that will help you learn how to use a PC. It is a book that will help you learn how to use a PC. It is a book that will help you learn how to use a PC.



# Games Week

Stuart 'Scorer' Campbell sticks up his points card and gives those games a real rating — from the atrocious unplayable to the amazingly adventurous

## STAR RATINGS

- Gerry Sawditz
- Denis Leary
- Bruce Morton
- Jimmy Tarbuck
- Andrew 'Dice' Day

## A NEW SAM GAME!

If they all jumped up and down with joy at the same time, there probably still wouldn't be enough Sam Coupé owners to job the skin off a new pudding, but those there are will doubtless be ecstatic to discover that Broderbund's wonderful *Prince Of Persia* is now moments away from release on their machine. The almost completed version even looks extremely spiffy and it might just breathe a little bit of life into the Sam market, which is currently dying on its feet due to software



• Making it hot look like 16, it's Sam Prince Of Persia.

starvation. If there's any justice at all in the world, this game will sell enough to make some other software houses bring out the odd release or two, so if you're a Sam owner you know what to do.

## THREE-MINUTE HERO

Following on from the recent news of their egg-like hero *Dizzy*'s huge success on the 64-bit, 100,000 sales of *Timezone Island Dizzy* on Spectrums alone, Code Masters has announced plans for a 16-bit *Dizzy* companion.

The five game set will include rewrites of several of the hard-boiled hero's 8-bit triumphs, along with a brand new Dizzy epic yet awaiting a title. The pack should hit the shelves in November at around £79.95, clearing the way for an attempt at the Christmas No. 1 slot.

## 'OH NO'

Please, tell me it's not true. It can't be, can it? Tell me it was just a horrible dream, that I'm going to wake up any minute now and laugh it off, albeit in a slightly nervous and apologetic manner. I mean, surely Alternative Software hasn't really just acquired the licence to produce an *Alto* Amiga computer game, for release on all major formats around September this year? It doesn't bear thinking about, does it? No, I'm sure it's all just a malicious rumour, put around by some mad scientist or someone like that. It must be, I hope...

## HERE IT COMES AGAIN

There are releases. Then there are re-releases. Then there are half-arsed attempts at squeezing more cash out of punters smart enough not to buy manly old rubbish the first time out, but not quite smart enough to resist a bargain at the second time of asking. You need to find out which is which. Luckily, I'm just the chap who can tell you. This week: SHOOT-EM-UPS.

## SUPER GUN RUNNER - Action 16 - Amiga and ST - £7.95

This Jeff Minter game follows the same path as all other Jeff Minter games — loads of speed, loads of zapping loads



• GE, it doesn't look like much, but just you play it...

of comets and loads of Pink Floyd logos. Unsurprisingly enough, it's a sequel to his 10-year-old 8-bit Centipede-style buster, and takes a very similar format, but it's extremely sticky slow, with lots

TOP 10	Game	Platform	Price
1	Bubble Bobble	Amiga	£19.95
2	Defender	Amiga	£19.95
3	Magical Land Dizzy	Amiga	£19.95
4	Castro-Corridor	Amiga	£19.95
5	Ringside 1	Amiga	£19.95
6	Dragon Master	Amiga	£19.95
7	Bubble Bobble	Amiga	£19.95
8	Defender	Amiga	£19.95
9	Magical Land Dizzy	Amiga	£19.95
10	Castro-Corridor	Amiga	£19.95

## RBI TWO BASEBALL

Hold on, I hear you say, 'RBI Two? What happened to RBI One, Don?' Well, it was released years ago on the Atari, that's what just occurred. RBI Three is coming soon on the Sega, but I won't credit the sequel was out that someone thought it'd bring it all the Amiga.

It's a baseball game (so no surprises there) in the mould of the classic classic *Hardball*, but cranked up a bit with the addition of sampled speech, lots of background info, an in-stadium scoreboard with dramatic animated displays for just about every occurrence in the game, and lots of other nice presentation tweaks. Which would all be so great if the game was a better, but better it isn't.

Mind you, it's not exactly a revolutionary success either. It uses much the same style and control system as every baseball game before it, relying more or less solely on timing to make the difference between a strike and a home run. Fielding is also, as usual, a complete pain in the back, and you're likely to spend quite a while watching the opposition stacking up the runs while your players play 'catch' with each other until you get the help of it. Still, these gripes disappear with a bit of patient finding. In particular, because so second-nature you wonder why all baseball games don't do it this way, and what you're left with is a beautifully presented, if slightly unremarkable sports sim that would be a

when you hit the ball, the screen switches to an overhead view, which could amount depending on the ball's trajectory. The ball actually leaves a dust trail behind it which makes it easier to spot.

perfectly reasonable buy if it wasn't for the marginally silly price tag. RBI is just too much for an ostensibly simple game like this (even if you do get a 'two' baseball cap in the package), and unless Donark bring it down to a more normal level, I can't say that this is very good value for your money at all.



• This is the view you'll see most of the traditional 'behind-the-batter' shot. The inset screen in the top corner shows one of your batters stealing a head start before the next hit.



• This defocused-looking view is the ball, and it performs different animated skills depending on the shot played. Here all your batters are out and the ball bounces away depressed, about to be batted off-screen by the words 'All Out'.

## TURRICAN 2

Amiga 500 • Amiga 1000 • ST • Atari • PC • Macintosh

This game was released on the 16-bit era quite some time ago to considerable critical acclaim, though there were several people who voiced complaints about its similarity to the first Turrican (well, there was no, anyway).

Now Rainbow Arts has finally finished converting all the 1500-odd screens of platform-shooting action into the Amiga, and the results are pretty stunning.

The graphics would defy the belief of anyone who has ascended to the earlier days of the Amiga, being packed with colour without any loss of detail or blackness (indeed, they're not far short of the 16-bit version), and the sound is solid and driving throughout, but it's the playability that really grabs. The next levels are packed with things to do, items to possess and secret bonuses to discover, and when you get deeper into the game it suddenly changes into an R-Type-style shoot-'em-up, knocking out the old man that Turrican was just too tamey.

Turrican 2 is a game that seems more at home on the old machine than it ever did on the Amiga and ST, and with it's probably not as some Amiga veterans are claiming the best CPC game ever. It's almost certainly the best shoot-'em-up the old machine's likely to see. A magnificent technical achievement which is, for once, with a great game.



Turrican 2 is a dark, colorful, and dangerous game.



GAMESWEEK  
GAMERS' GUIDE

## HATSTAND CORNER

Rainbird's epic of Arctic exploration and strategic manoeuvring Alchemist was a major hit in Britain and the US a year or so ago, but some people in the industry have expressed a degree of surprise that it wasn't more successful in Europe, where the kind of mind-stretching master of character interaction and endless trapping around locally pass down well.

I can now reveal that the main reason was that the word 'Alchemist' sounds unconvincingly similar to an obscure Bavarian slang word for a homosexual prostitute, and Rainbird decided that in the interests of sensibility it would be better to rename the game.

Unfortunately, while they tried to think it's a new title, the European public got fed up waiting and the game eventually bombed disastrously.

Wexley 3D bag-standard alone stopped down the bag standard score in bag-standard patterns, stopped only by the player's bag standard who, which could have any of a million impressive-looking night-relations boiled on it in a bold attempt to hide the complete lack of imaginative features in the bag standard of imagination. By 3D means below 11 quad on this if you want to impress your friends with your Alchemist's processing power (the ST version doesn't have the glorious in-game music, and so half the game's appeal is lost immediately) but you'd still get more gameplay if you bought a copy of X-Men and a Bomb. The last 12-14th with the money instead.



I'm bored with X-Men II, so here's a picture of a good game instead.

still presentation and the kind of addictive blasting action that were our 16-fusion years ago. Needless to say, it's excellent fun, and the kind of game that you'll never tire of looking up when you fancy a bit of a post-slaughtering session.

**R-TYPE** • The Hit Squad • All formats • £7.99 for 16-bit and £3.99 for 8-bit  
The classic term coin-op was a conversion that many people had seen completely impossible in the 8-bit and

asking a bit of even the Amiga one ST. Alchemist proved them all wrong with a set of conversions of variable quality from the slightly simplified, but very playable ST version and the also-simplified but not so accurate Amiga one. It's the absolutely amazing Spectrum copy. The Spacey was pushed beyond its limits, with huge graphics bursting with non-clashing colour and a game which replicated the arcade original perfectly in almost every way.

All versions (with the possible



• A really big thinking one in Amiga R-Type.

exception of the C64) are well worth getting, but any Spectrum owner who doesn't have the game in his software collection, doesn't have a software collection. (Spectrum version)

**XENON 2 - Mirror Image** • Amiga and ST • £10.99

At The King's New Clothes, Chris reached for new superlatives on seeing this superbly-twisted follow-up to the game that launched the Romag Brothers on an unsuspecting world, but perhaps it may have served them all well. It has bypassed the fabulous music and the lovely graphics, where they'd have found a perfectly-crafting shoot-'em-up of the most bag-standard nature imaginable.

## TOP 10

ST	Amiga	Amiga	Amiga
1	6	Port Contact	Twin 17
2	7	Pro Daring	Code Masters
3	5	Command RAC Rally	ST AG PC
4	4	Xenon 2	ST AG PC
5	3	RE R-Type	ST AG PC
6	2	Defender of the Crown	ST AG PC
7	1	Parasite World Dizzy	Code Masters
8	10	NE Classic 4	ST AG PC
9	9	Wasteland	ST AG PC
10	8	RE World Class Leaderboard	Kixx

ST = Amiga 500 • AG = Commodore Amiga PC • PC = IBM PC or compatible • ST = Other

## BEG, BORROW AND BURN

### BEG HUNTER • Activision



• Rimey, that's a big dropper, almost (Grrr)

Coming from the people who brought you Rimey droppers, you might expect this epic of 3D exploration and rabbit-shooting to be a bit average. Luckily though, it's a fairly wonderful, and assuming that it's finally in the shop (it's been finished for ages), you really do want to be getting out there and buying it sharpish.

### BORROW PROFLIGHT • Hi-Sort

Coming from the people who brought you, um, lots of really great antisocial utility software, you might expect this flight sim to be a bit on the antisocial side. And it is. So serious, in fact, that there's NOTHING TO SHOOT IN IT AT ALL. If you fancy a pure flying experience it's the program for you, but game fans beware.



• Play 'Spot The Buddha' in Proflight.

### BURN RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR • SSI US Gold



• Easily the most interesting picture in RLL

Coming from the people who brought you Eye Of The Beholder, you might expect this wargame to be a bit tame. Actually, it tastes like mouth-bell on a hedgehog. Loads of background detail and high-tech gobble, but almost no game at all.

### PP HAMMER Demomasters Amiga • ST and C64

1. Xenon 2 (Amiga) and R-Type (Amiga) • 2. R-Type (Amiga) • 3. R-Type (Amiga) • 4. R-Type (Amiga) • 5. R-Type (Amiga) • 6. R-Type (Amiga) • 7. R-Type (Amiga) • 8. R-Type (Amiga) • 9. R-Type (Amiga) • 10. R-Type (Amiga)

1. R-Type
2. R-Type
3. R-Type
4. R-Type
5. R-Type
6. R-Type
7. R-Type
8. R-Type
9. R-Type
10. R-Type

# SURVIVAL IN THE PC JUNGLE



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# OUTPUT MADE PERFECT?

For serious desktop publishing output, a Postscript laser printer is now almost a necessity. Tim Howell puts the Epson EPL-7500 to the test see if it's got what it takes



• From birds of prey to trains, these are a few examples of what Epson's baby is capable of in Postscript mode.

**PRODUCT:** Epson EPL-7500 Postscript laser printer  
**COMPATIBILITY:** Amiga, Atari ST, PC, Macintosh  
**SUPPLIER:** Epson

Ordinary laser printers, while being more expensive than dot matrix models, make up for this by having excellent print quality. However, for serious desktop publishing, you really need a laser printer that is Postscript compatible. Postscript is a language which turns documents into a description of what the final printed page should look like, which is then converted by the printer for improved output.

Epson's EPL-7500 is a Postscript compatible laser printer. As well as Postscript, the EPL-7500 is also capable of emulating the Hewlett Packard LaserJet II, which is very useful as not all applications support Postscript files.

Epson claims the machine is capable of printing A4-sized pages at a speed of six pages per minute (ppm) and we found nothing to dispute this. Its maximum resolution is 300 dots per inch (dpi). While these features are relatively common these days, the Postscript capability on its own is worth looking at.

## SETTING UP

In comparison with many other laser printers the Epson is physically unusual. It is larger in width than A4 paper and its paper tray sticks out at the front of the machine, instead of sitting on top and being part of the printer's natural footprint.

The printer can be hooked up by either its serial, parallel or AppleLink ports. The Amiga and ST, like most machines, use the parallel port to transfer data to the printer. Apple Macintoshes would also be able to use the built-in AppleLink interface. Two computers can be connected to the printer at once, so long as the AppleLink and serial ports are not used simultaneously.

Several disks are supplied with the printer for the



• Epson's first Postscript laser printer is physically large compared with other printers, but does its size outweigh with the number of features it offers?

PC and Macintosh. They contain drivers for applications software to use the printer's own characteristics. Amiga and ST owners who want to use the printer can use its Postscript and HP LaserJet II emulations. Most applications software includes drivers for the HP LaserJet II, whereas Postscript support is mainly included with serious word processing and desktop publishing packages.

## IN CONTROL

A liquid-crystal display (LCD) shows the printer's settings. Arrow keys on the printer's control panel switch between different options, such as its interface the printer is being controlled from, how fast it's communicating with the computer and by what method the paper is being fed.

Once the control panel is used, the printer's settings are easy to change. There are two different menu selections to work from, which access either straightforward sub-menus. The LCD screen is informative and spells out problems when they arise.

However, solving these problems is another matter. While nothing drastically wrong happened during the review period, the problem section in the manual isn't overly helpful at doing what it's there for.

One potential problem for Postscript printers in general is that they need a lot of memory to store and subsequently print page information. This isn't a problem with the Epson as it comes with 2Mb as standard which is about the minimum usable amount for desktop publishing. Postscript printers with less memory can still work, but it would take a lot longer for the page(s) to be set up and printed.

The imaging cartridge the Epson uses is supposed to last for 6,000 pages, which, Epson estimates, is about six months. Replacement cartridges cost £115, which is a fairly standard price.

## PUT OUT BY SOME OUTPUT

Print quality in Laserjet mode was not too impressive. Both text and graphics printed at the highest resolution (300 dpi) did not come out too well - the graphics looked jagged. Text wasn't very well defined either, especially when taking into account how long it took to process. It must be said though, if you are going to buy a Postscript laser printer then Laserjet emulations would only be a secondary consideration - it's just nice to know it's there.

However, in Postscript mode the output looked much better and printed considerably faster. This illustrates the ability of both the page language and the printer. Postscript files are sent to the printer in bursts of data, the printer then processes it and prints it soon after. Even files of over 300K took just over two minutes to send, process and print. In comparison to other Postscript printers this is quite impressive.

For test output, there are 35 standard Postscript fonts included. That is the standard number supported by PC applications. Other fonts can be downloaded by PC applications, including WordPerfect and Microsoft Word, or can be defined by the user to be compatible, but the manual doesn't go into this.

## PAGE BREAKING OFF

Epson's EPL-7500 is a good printer for Postscript printing. It is fast and the print quality is very good, but in a Postscript printer this feature would be useful to have, and probably not essential. In terms of its price - £1,399 - it costs a lot more than other non-Postscript printers. This added cost can be explained by the Postscript feature which has to be licensed from Adobe. However, in terms of output quality this extra expense is worthwhile. ■

## THE BOTTOM LINE

- FOR**
- ▲ Postscript compatibility
  - ▲ Large amount of memory as standard
  - ▲ Fast in Postscript mode
  - ▲ Easy to use control panel

- AGAINST**
- ▼ Large footprint
  - ▼ Slow in Laserjet mode
  - ▼ Paper feeding sometimes awkward

PRICE: £1,399

## POSTSCRIPT SOFTWARE

### AMIGA

Postscript II (1.0) (Epson/AppleLink)

### ATARI ST

Postscript II (1.0) (Epson/AppleLink)

Control language II (1.0) (Epson/AppleLink)





# WONDER BOX

Keith Pomfret bought a crate of beer and invited the neighbours round to see how Commodore's CDTV multimedia machine competes with satellite TV, NIC AM and video

**PRODUCT:** CDTV  
**MACHINE:** Interactive Multimedia Machine  
**FROM:** Commodore UK  
**CONTACT:** High Street consumer electronic retailers  
**COST:** £599

Imagine a machine that can hold the entire output of The Beatles and any other 40 famous groups, as MIDI files on one disk. This machine can also teach your children to spell, count, add up and even talk. It can interact with you offering a world of options in which you make the decisions and it carries them out.

You can be Sherlock Holmes, untangle out the Hound of the Baskinlevies, remix your favourite CD, play games, build sites and look up any of over 25,000 entries in an encyclopedia that gives you more than words. Choose a subject and as well as text there may be a picture or even a sample of sound.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

This is CDTV. It comes in a matt black box shaped like a video recorder and requires nothing more precious than the ability to push a button on a remote control to bring it to life. A removable caddy at the front holds a CD which can be single audio, CD with graphics or interactive multimedia. When Commodore announced CDTV (Commodore Dynamic Television) it chose the red-way multimedia path which allows the best existing technology to give you an interactive environment.

The CDTV has a CD-ROM drive for mass storage of video, sound and graphics. For its logic and control, it uses the tried and tested technology of the Amiga. At this it is a box shaped like and controlled in the same way as a video recorder is Commodore's pitch at the next generation of interactive learning and entertainment.

If you switch on a video, player or a TV set you are entertained but not necessarily stimulated into action. The point of a multimedia system like the CDTV is that it is open ended. At its simplest, it can be used to play an audio CD. In this mode, you don't even need to connect it to a monitor although the clever graphic display on the monitor makes it easy for even the most techno-phobic to persuade it to divulge the secrets of their favourite disc.

## Instead of watching a production for pure entertainment, you are able to 'get in' and make decisions

One step up from audio CD is CD with graphics (CD + G). This has been widely publicised but not much has been seen. The occasional video track included on to an audio CD has been its limit until CDTV. Now we are seeing a wide range of discs, planned from learning packages, where a word-over is illustrated on screen, to Karaoke discs, where the words are displayed in time with the music.

## GET INTERACTIVE

The area in which CDTV shines most is as an interactive machine. Instead of watching a production for pure entertainment, you are able to get in and make decisions. A CDTV disc has up to 600Mb of storage space and because a CD is digitally catalogued, this information can be accessed at any point within seconds. Unlike normal entertainment such as a video, there's no need to run a title from end to end and making a choice from an on-screen prompt can access anywhere on the disc.

A simple application would be a disc with a program of learning on it. As well as utilizing the computing

power of CDTV, it could contain a vast array of choices on the 600Mb disc. More complicated titles could have anything from an audio visual encyclopedia to a complete interactive virtual world.

Any machine inspiring entertainment, information and data can only be as strong as the titles that are available on it. Whereas on a computer we say software, in multimedia the buzzword is title. CDTV has hardware from the Amiga so, there is doubt to be a confusion over whether it is running a 'title' or 'software'.

## HOME TRIAL

We took the CDTV home, inside room for it in pricing the NICAM boxes, satellite decoders and video recorders. We fed its output to a huge 25-inch TV monitor and a stereo amplifier and speakers.

The Amiga heritage of the CDTV means that it can be connected to just about anything. Video ports enable connection to a standard television, a composite monitor or an RGB monitor.

Using CDTV with a regular TV takes the sound to the TV via the modulated signal but to take advantage of the sound options available, a stereo amplifier and speakers are necessary.

A pair of stereo phone outputs take the audio signals from CDTV and a telephone socket on the front of the cabinet gives private listening via any headphones with a standard 14 inch stereo phone jack.

Most users buying a CDTV as an extension to their TV and video won't need to use any more of the connectors than those that give basic video and audio, but people wanting to dig deeper and utilise the computer hardware within CDTV will be grateful of ports for keyboards, peripherals, floppy disks, modems, printers and an internal expansion designed to take a game.

The computer side of CDTV is comprised with a slot for memory expansion to complement the 1Mb of on-board RAM. This could be used for RAM or ROM cards from 64K to 512K.

## WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY

We set the CDTV up as part of the normal living room entertainment system to get the reaction of the neighbours. John, 43, whose hobbies are video and cowboy boots and is currently unemployed, was impressed. He sat on the sofa and casually said his eye over the CDTV remote control.

"Just like the video," he said. The encyclopedia impressed him and he soon came to grips with the idea of music and pictures to complement the words. A snarl of classical music in the entry for a computer brought a gleam of recognition: "That's an advert on the TV," he said.

We dragged John away from the CDTV for long enough to let his sons Steve and Mike get to grips with Lemmings and a couple of the intensive adventure games. Control of a game can be passed from player to player with the infra-red remote control. Although not a very sophisticated prospect, the remote control was accurate and light enough to throw across the lounge.

## MORE THAN A FANCY TELEVISION

It took a long while to persuade the boys to go home and when they did finally go after "just one more game", there was no respite. We invited in school teacher Andy to evaluate the educational aspects of the machine.

He said: "It advertised in the Sunday papers but admitted to confusion. 'The ads got over the fact that it's good and state-of-the-art, but they don't actually say what it is', he noted. A couple of hours' sponging through the educational titles confirmed that it would be welcome at St Bede's RC primary school. 'The only problem I'd have justifying it, is the fact that it's difficult enough getting cash for a computer never mind a fancy television,' he said.

We plugged in a disk drive, added a keyboard borrowed from an Amiga 486 and he went away thoughtfully composing a letter to the headmaster.

## KARAOKE PARTY

Musicon Paul Dobie thought that the CDTV's MIDI ports were a good idea. "The thing that's made the Atari ST popular amongst the musos is the MIDI. This machine takes Atari's offering into a corner. It'll take some work to make the sequencers as good as those available on the other machines, but the huge CD drive more than makes up for it," he said.

He pointed to the slot for a memory card: "From the 10,000 songs you could have as MIDI files be a CD, you could load say a 40 minute set into it. As you arrived at a gig, you could decide on what's appropriate for the audience and build a set on site."

We pointed to the Karaoke discs and we were in business. Paul plays a hotel gig on a Sunday night and between his sets normally puts in a tape. The CDTV, a couple of Karaoke discs and a professional sound system had the 200 plus audience singing along. The CDTV plugged into the hotel's TV network and it only then became a few more Karaoke discs.

The more astute CDTV games pags guessed that there was a computer somewhere under the matt black cover and when shown its Amiga capabilities, no-one was surprised. The overall impression was that CDTV is a good idea, fun to use, easy to set up and stain and was an ideal complement to a TV and video setup. Its simple user interface and remote control meant that it was comfortable to use from any where in the room.

There are a couple of dozen starter titles, a dozen or so questionable ones and a whole multitude of Amiga software that will run on it. If the developers stick with it, CDTV will be an enormous success. The only other possible home multimedia machine in the frame is the Philips CD-I, the launch of which is a year away, and the anticipated price will be twice that of a CDTV. ■

# IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE? NO, IT'S CDTV

## TITLES

Before you even look at titles designed for CDTV, there is a vast array of existing CDs that will run on the CDTV. Any conventional audio CD or CD with video will run.

The titles that are CDTV specific fall into two groups. There are those based on existing Amiga software, and those designed for the intensive multimedia environment.

Here are some of the first CDTV titles to arrive:



● **The Hutchinson Encyclopedia**  
With the disc in the CDTV, a three minute guided tour takes you through the features of the encyclopedia. It is based on the Hutchinson single volume encyclopedia and offers pictures, maps, sound, music,

help, and information. The option of sound and video with the description gives an encyclopedia with the ability to design a complete descriptive archive.

Commodore is quite rightly proud of Hutchinson and cites it as a true example of interactive learning.

● **A Run for Rammy** is an interactive story for young children. The computer graphics combine with a story told by former Doctor Who, Ten Baker and enables the child to join in a decision-making process.

The story culminates in the making of loud clowns and there's even a hedge for making them.

**A Run for Rammy** is an educational title for children aged three to six.



● **The bloodstained cover of Psycho Killer** promises a bloodbath of gory entertainment which it fails to deliver. The idea is that you wander through a virtual world of video anaphors, collecting clues and evidence to bring the villain to book.

The quality of the images and the somewhat quirky interface make it an infuriating task. This is a pity because, this is the sort of puzzle solving that could make much better use of CDTV's features.

With more attention to quality and detail, this interactive adventuring could become a cult on CDTV.

● **5th City** needs no introduction as it is already available as software on most home computers. It gains playability from the vast amount of data that can be stored on a CD and the infra-red remote control makes it simple to play from the armchair.

● **The First Fish Collection** on CD-ROM is more of a computer buff's Christmas present than a true multimedia title. It is a collection of the first 400 or so fish data for the Amiga. These represent a huge collection of Public Domain software running to hundreds of megabytes but they are first and foremost computer titles. A lot of them need a QWERTY keyboard to run and although it's useful to have so many programs in one tidy package, someone buying CDTV as a consumer electronics product will be baffled at a product needing the Amiga Workbench to run properly.

● **CD Rammy** (DJ is a bee). This is an interesting editing title that lets you edit, cut and paste matches and snippets from audio CDs to produce your own mixes. The instructions take you through the features of the CD Rammy, showing you how to cut, edit and remix your CD. It's your lucky 7! (Enough to even a copy of Madonna's Immediate Collection, there's a demo which shows you the power of interactive mixing.

● **Women in Motion** is a late 19th study of the female form by Edward Strydom. It is a collection of early photographic animations of scantily clad and naked ladies going through the motions of such mundane tasks as walking, climbing and throwing water all over each other. It is cast as Art and leisure entertainment for adults but is more of a curiosity than a vision of Victorian erotica.

● **Other interactive titles available include** *Wash of the Deceit*, badge as entertainment, *Howd of the Baskerville* which casts you in the role of detective, *Sherlock Holmes and Lemmings*, the infuriating *cutting puzzle game* that has taken all of the major computer formats by storm this year.

● **The CDTV can also read and play** CD + G discs with graphics as well as sound. While looking CDTV over, we ran a couple of Karaoke discs on it and were impressed enough to take it along to a gig on a Saturday night.

Hutchinson and Lemmings come in the box with CDTV. All of the other titles are available through companies distributing CDTV.

Titles vary in price from around £15 to upwards of £50 for some of the heavyweight serious titles.

## ACCESSORIES

The accessories due for CDTV are keyboard, infra-red mouse (called *Remote* because there's no ball, joystick, trackball, disk drives and other add-ons yet to be announced.



## COMPETITION

At present CDTV is the only player in the field. Philips is standing in the wings with the CD-I system which has a more comprehensive specification than CDTV, but it is a year away and more expensive.

Commodore plans a CD-ROM drive for the Amiga which may in itself prove to be a competitor for CDTV. CD-ROM will surely help the development of titles, but could curb sales of the CDTV machines.



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Which computer(s), if any, do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

# POWER UP YOUR PC!

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Have you got a PC XT that's a bit pedestrian?  
Turbocharge your ailing 16-bit with an £821 card  
that wrings a screaming 25 MHz from your machine

The IBM PC AT trundled along at around 8MHz when it was first introduced by IBM. The combination of this and its 16-bit architecture gave it an impressive turn of speed when compared with the slower 4.77MHz XT.

Times have changed and AT owners are looking for a way to upgrade to the faster more streamlined 386 environment

without ripping their PCs apart to replace the motherboard.

The SOTA Express 386 is a painless way of upgrading that requires no more than the existing 286 removing and the small SOTA Express board putting in its place.

The benefits of upgrading to 386 processing are background processing, multi-tasking and enhanced mode. The advantage of the SOTA board is that it can be slotted into most ATs without modification and is an instant solution.

If you're an AT or AT clone that you're happy with, but would like more

performance without upheaval, this could be your upgrade path.

There are two simple ways to get the SOTA Express386. Either dig deep into your pocket for £821 and call distributor CTS Sales and Distribution on 0205 559944, or simply answer a few questions, complete the tokeniser in less than 12 witty words and hope that you're the lucky winner.

Send your answers and the broken on the back of a postcard or envelope to: SOTA Express386 Compas, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2DL to arrive no later than 17 August 1991. ■

## FOUR STEPS TO HEAVEN ON YOUR MACHINE

1) What speed did the PCXT originally run at?

- a) 4.769Hz
- b) 4.769Hz
- c) 4.769Hz
- d) 4.769Hz
- e) 4.769Hz

2) Which company distributing the SOTA Express386 has the telephone number 0205 559944?

- a) CTS Sales and Distribution
- b) CTS Retail Supplies
- c) GPO Telephones
- d) BBC Enterprises

3) Which of the following central processors runs the fastest?

- a) Intel 8086
- b) Intel 80186
- c) Intel 80286
- d) Intel 80386SX

4) In what year was mainframe designer Seymour Cray born?

- a) 1908
- b) 1907
- c) 1925
- d) 1940

When you've answered the questions complete the following tokeniser in less than 12 words: I need upgrading up to the breathtaking speed of 25MHz because...

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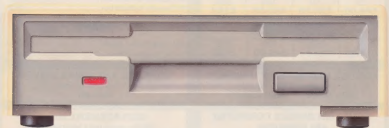
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